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CHRIST'S CHRISTIANITY



# CHRIST'S CHRISTIANITY

BY  
COUNT LEO ✓ TOLSTOI

*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN*

LONDON

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION.

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COUNT LEO TOLSTOI was born in 1829, in Russia, in the county of Toula, on his mother's hereditary estate. His father, Count Nicolas Tolstoi, had taken part in the campaigns of 1812 and 1813, and was the direct descendant in the fifth generation of Count Peter Tolstoi, the friend and comrade of Peter the Great. His mother belonged to the family of the Princess Volkonsky, but she died before he was two years old, and he was entrusted to the care of a distant relative, and was educated at first by his aunts.

In 1837 the family removed to Moscow, where his father died suddenly, and Leo, with his aunt, a brother, and sister, went to live, for the sake of economy, on his mother's estate, which had become impoverished by want of care.

In 1841 the guardianship of the children passed into the hands of another aunt, who lived at Kazan, and thither the family removed. The boys there received

the usual course of training from Russian and foreign tutors, in preparation for the university, Leo entering the faculty of Eastern languages, and a year later that of law. Before the close of the second year's course, Leo left the university and Kazan with his two elder brothers, and, his mother's estate having fallen to him in the division of the family property, he lived there until, in 1851, he accompanied his eldest brother, Nicholas, on a journey in the Caucasus. The life there pleased him so much that he joined his brother's battery. In the Caucasus he first began to write.

In 1852 his "Childhood" appeared in the *Contemporary*, and the two sequent parts, "Boyhood" and "Manhood," were begun. About this time were also written "A Landowner's Morning" and "The Cozaks."

From 1851 to 1853 he shared in the summer campaigns in the Caucasus, and in the latter year was transferred, at his own request, to the army of the Danube, where, on the staff of Count Michael Gortchakoff, he took part in the campaign of 1854; and on the retreat of the Russian army to Yassy, went to Sebastopol, and was attached to a field battery, being appointed in 1855 to the command of a mountain battery, and was present at the battle of the Black River on the 4th of August, and at the storming of Sebastopol on the 8th. After this, he was sent with despatches to St. Petersburg, and joined the rocket battery.

Between 1853 and 1855 his "Sebastopol in September," "Sebastopol in May," and "A Forest" were written;



and in the latter year he left the army, and lived during the winter at St. Petersburg and Moscow, and in summer, with the exception of two journeys abroad, on his estate, until 1861, after which year he gave himself up entirely to a country life, writing in his retirement "Sebastopol in August," "The Two Hussars," "Albert," "Lucerne," "Three Deaths," "Family Happiness," and "Polikoushka."

In 1861 he became a country magistrate, and also occupied himself with the peasant schools, for the improvement of which he edited an educational magazine, which bore the name of his estate, "Yasnaya Poliana," and to which he contributed articles, founded upon practical acquaintance acquired amongst the children, which form by themselves a most important and original contribution to the question of education, and are remarkable from the novelty and success of the system, or rather absence of system, he advocated ; which was based on the most unrestrained and friendly relation of pupil to teacher, and was directed and limited intellectually more by the pupil's wish for instruction, and the necessities of his surrounding life, than by a preconceived notion on the part of the classes in power as to a uniform and invariable scale of oftentimes unnecessary acquirement.

In 1862 Count Tolstoi married, and, staying in the country, occupied himself with the education of his children.

During this period he wrote his "Alphabet" and

"Reading Primers," which are considered by many to be the best of their kind in Russian literature, and are extensively used, yearly becoming more popular. It was also at this time that he wrote "War and Peace," and "Anna Karenina," his two most important literary works.

Since the publication of the latter, Count Tolstoi's life has undergone a complete change. He has entirely devoted himself to Christ's teaching. He has studied it searchingly and indefatigably, the literary result being four works, containing :—

1. An account of that development of his life and thoughts which ended in the conviction that the truth of life is contained in the teaching of Christ.

2. An investigation into the interpretation of this teaching according to the Orthodox Greek Church and according to the Church in general.

3. An independent study of the Gospel, and a summary of the author's way of understanding it.

4. An exposition of the true meaning of Christ's message, the reasons of its distortion, and what will be the results of its real promulgation.

He is now writing an article in examination of his own former life and of social life in general, which, in common with these four works, are not allowed to be published in Russia, although extensively read in manuscript copies. The only works of his which have been published, since his change of views of life, have been short tales, which, making the reader the moralist,

illustrate simply and powerfully the action of mutual Christian love.

Many of Count Tolstoi's previous literary works have been, and are being, translated into other languages, and foreign critics have confirmed the verdict of his own countrymen, who class him among the ablest authors of any time and country.

The present translation does not, however, concern those previous writings, and is taken from the first and fourth of the manuscripts above referred to, a few passages dealing with the more abstract side of religion being omitted. "The Spirit of Christ's Teaching" is only a condensed summary of the author's reading of Christ's teaching, drawn from two manuscripts not here translated, and, although the outcome of two volumes of deep and conscientious investigation, it will naturally appear to many entirely unfounded in so condensed a form.

This volume is published with the hope of obtaining the opinion of those who are seriously interested in the subject of Christ's teaching, who feel that Truth is many-sided, and must be seen by men in many ways, and who are ready from any point of view to examine, not in angry denial, but with honest love and patience, a faith that has helped and is helping men out of the saddest depths of distrust and violence into the only way of following Christ's light they are able to understand, and which they are endeavouring, however feebly, to realize in practical life.

The translation of all works of this kind is extremely difficult, the passages most powerful in the original becoming in the process the most confused ; and, without entire recasting, involving much expenditure of time, the present translation could not have been radically improved.

The Editor has hesitated to delay the publication of a work concerning so vital a subject, and offers it in its present form only to those who are more in search of truth than of style.

NOTE.—The Editor will be grateful for any kind of criticism upon the work by any one who is in earnest, which may be sent to H. F. Battersby, Ashburne, Ealing.

PART I.

HOW I CAME TO BELIEVE.



# CHRIST'S CHRISTIANITY.



AN INTRODUCTION TO AN UNPUBLISHED  
WORK BY COUNT L. TOLSTOI.

## I.

I WAS christened and educated in the faith of the Orthodox Greek Church ; I was taught it in my childhood, and I learned it in my youth. Nevertheless, at eighteen years of age, when I quitted the university, I had discarded all belief in anything that I had been taught. To judge by what I can now remember, I could never have had a very serious belief ; it must have been a kind of trust in this teaching, based on one in my teachers and elders, and, moreover, a trust not very firmly grounded.

I remember once in my twelfth year, a boy, now long since dead, Vladimir M——, a pupil in a gymnasium, spent a Sunday with us, and brought us the news of the last discovery in the gymnasium, namely, that there was no God, and that all we were taught on the subject was a mere invention (this was in 1838). I remember well how interested my elder brothers were in this

news ; I was admitted to their deliberations, and we all eagerly accepted the theory as something particularly attractive and possibly quite true. I remember, also, that when my elder brother, Demetry, then at the university, with the impulsiveness natural to his character, gave himself up to a passionate faith, began to attend the Church services regularly, to fast, and to lead a pure and moral life, we all of us, and some older than ourselves, never ceased to hold him up to ridicule, and for some incomprehensible reason gave him the nickname of Noah. I remember that Moussin-Poushkin, the then curator of the University of Kazan, having invited us to a ball, tried to persuade my brother, who had refused the invitation, by the jeering argument that even David danced before the Ark.

I sympathized then with these jokes of my elders, and drew from them this conclusion, that I was bound to learn my catechism, and go to church, but that it was not necessary to think of my religious duties more seriously. I also remember that I read Voltaire when I was very young, and that his tone of mockery amused without disgusting me. The gradual estrangement from all belief went on in me, as it does, and always has done, in those of the same social position and culture. This falling off, as it seems to me, for the most part goes on as follows :—people live as others live, and their lives are guided, not by the principles of the faith which is taught them, but by their very opposite ; belief has no influence on life, nor on the relations between men—it is relegated to some other sphere where life is not ; if the two ever come into contact at all, belief



is only one of the outward phenomena, and not one of the constituent parts of life.

By a man's life, by his acts, it was then, as it is now, impossible to know whether he was a believer or not. If there be a difference between one who openly professes the doctrines of the Orthodox Church, and one who denies them, the difference is to the advantage of the former. The open profession of the Orthodox doctrines is mostly found among persons of dull intellects, of stern character, and who think much of their own importance. Intelligence, honesty, frankness, a good heart, and moral conduct are oftener met with among those who are disbelievers. The schoolboy is taught his catechism and sent to church ; from the grown man is required a certificate of his having taken the Holy Communion. A man, however, belonging to our class, neither goes to school nor is bound by the regulations affecting those in the public service, and may now live through long years—still more was this the case formerly—without being once reminded of the fact that he lives among Christians, and calls himself a member of the Orthodox Church.

Thus it happens that now, as formerly, the influence of early religious teaching, accepted merely on trust and upheld by authority, gradually fades away under the knowledge and practical experience of later life, which is opposed to all its principles, and that a man often believes for years that his early faith is still intact, while all the time not a particle of it remains in him.

A certain S——, a clever and veracious man, once related to me how he came to cease to believe.

Twenty-six years ago, being on a hunting party, before he lay down to rest, according to a habit of his from childhood, he knelt down to pray. His elder brother, who was of the party, lay on some straw and watched him. When S—— had finished, and was preparing to lie down, his brother said to him, "Ah, you still keep that up?" Nothing more passed between them, but from that day S—— ceased to pray and to go to church. For thirty years S—— has not said a prayer, has not taken the Communion, has not been in a church, not because he shared the convictions of his brother, or even knew them, not because he had come to any conclusions of his own, but because his brother's words were like the push of a finger against a wall ready to tumble over with its own weight; they proved to him that what he had taken for belief was an empty form, and that consequently every word he uttered, every sign of the cross he made, every time he bowed his head during his prayers, his act was an unmeaning one. When he once admitted to himself that such acts had no meaning in them, he could not but discontinue them. Thus it has been, and is, I believe, with the large majority of men.

I speak of men of our class, of men who are true to themselves, and not of those who make of religion a means of obtaining some temporal advantage. (These men are truly absolute unbelievers, for if faith be to them a means of obtaining any worldly end, it is most certainly no faith at all.) Such men of our own class are in the following position, the knowledge and experience of active life has shattered the artificially constructed building of belief within, and they have either

observed that and cleared away the superincumbent ruins, or they have remained unconscious of the destruction worked.

The belief instilled from childhood, in me, as in so many others, gradually disappeared, but with this difference, that as from fifteen years of age I had begun to read philosophical works, I was conscious of my own disbelief. From the age of sixteen I ceased to pray, and ceased, from conviction, to attend the services of the Church and to fast. I no longer accepted the faith of my childhood, but I had a vague belief in something, though I do not think I could exactly explain in what. I believed in a God, or rather, I did not deny the existence of God, but anything relating to the nature of that godhead I could not have described ; I denied neither Christ nor his teaching, but in what that teaching consisted I could not have said.

Now, when I think over that time I see clearly, that all the faith I had, the only belief which, apart from mere animal instinct, swayed my life, was a belief in a possibility of perfection, though what it was in itself, or what would be its results, I was unable to say. I endeavoured to reach perfection in intellectual attainments ; my studies were extended in every direction of which my life afforded me a chance ; I strove to strengthen my will, forming for myself rules which I forced myself to follow ; I did my best to develop my physical powers by every exercise calculated to give strength and agility, and by way of accustoming myself to patient endurance I subjected myself to many voluntary hardships and trials of privation. All this I looked upon as necessary to obtain

the perfection at which I aimed. At first, of course, moral perfection seemed to me the main end, but I soon found myself contemplating in its stead an ideal of general perfectibility; in other words, I wished to be better, not in my own eyes nor in those of God, but in the sight of other men. This feeling again soon ended in another, the desire to have more power than others, to secure for myself a greater share of fame, of social distinction, and of wealth.

## II.

AT some future time I may relate the story of my life, and dwell in detail on the pathetic and instructive incidents of my youth. Many others must have passed through the same as I did. I honestly desired to make myself a good and virtuous man; but I was young, I had passions, and I stood alone, altogether alone, in my search after virtue. Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter, but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions, I was praised and encouraged. I found ambition, love of power, love of gain, lechery, pride, anger, vengeance, held in high esteem. I gave way to these passions, and becoming like unto my elders, I felt that the place which I filled in the world satisfied those around me. My kind-hearted aunt, a really good woman, used to say to me, that there was one thing above all others which she wished for me—an intrigue with a married woman:

“Rien ne forme un jeune homme, comme une liaison avec une femme comme il faut.” Another of her wishes for my happiness was, that I should become an adjutant, and, if possible, to the Emperor; the greatest happiness of all for me she thought would be, that I should find a wealthy bride, who would bring me as her dowry an enormous number of slaves.

I cannot now recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing.

I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, and murder, all committed by me, not one crime omitted, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man. Such was my life during ten years.

During that time I began to write, out of vanity, love of gain, and pride. I followed as a writer the same path which I had chosen as a man. In order to obtain the fame and the money for which I wrote, I was obliged to hide what was good and bow down before what was evil. How often while writing have I cudgelled my brains to conceal under the mask of indifference or pleasantry those yearnings for something better which formed the real problem of my life! I succeeded in my object, and was praised. At twenty-six years of age, on the close of the war, I came to St. Petersburg and made the acquaintance of the authors of the day.

I met with a hearty reception and much flattery.

Before I had time to look around, the prejudices and views of life common to the writers of the class with which I associated became my own, and completely put an end to all my former struggles after a better life. These views, under the influence of the dissipation into which I plunged, issued in a theory of life which justified it. The view of life taken by these my fellow-writers was, that life is a development, and the principal part in that development is played by ourselves, the thinkers, while among the thinkers the chief influence is again due to ourselves, the poets. Our vocation is to teach mankind.

In order to avoid answering the very natural question, "What do I know, and what can I teach?" the theory in question is made to contain the formula, that such is not required to be known, but that the thinker and the poet teach unconsciously. I was myself considered a marvellous *littérateur* and poet, and I therefore very naturally adopted this theory. Meanwhile, thinker and poet though I was, I wrote and taught I knew not what. For doing this I received large sums of money; I kept a splendid table, had an excellent lodging, associated with loose women, and received my friends handsomely; moreover, I had fame. It would seem, then, that what I taught must have been good; the faith in poetry and the development of life was a true faith, and I was one of its high priests, a post of great importance, and of profit. I long remained in this belief, and never once doubted its truth.

In the second, however, and especially in the third year of this way of life, I began to doubt the infallibility

of the doctrine, and to examine it more closely. The first doubtful fact which attracted my attention was, that the apostles of this belief did not agree among themselves. Some proclaimed that they alone were good and useful teachers, and all others worthless ; while those opposed to them said the same of themselves. They disputed, quarrelled, abused, deceived, and cheated one another.

Moreover, there were many among us who, quite indifferent to right or wrong, only cared for their own private interests. All this forced on me doubts as to the truth of our belief. Again, when I doubted this faith in the influence of literary men, I began to examine more closely into the character and conduct of its chief professors, and I convinced myself that these writers were men who led immoral lives, most of them worthless and insignificant individuals, and far beneath the moral level of those with whom I had associated during my former dissipated and military career ; these men, however, had none the less an amount of self-confidence only to be expected in those who are conscious of being saints, or in those for whom holiness is an empty name.

I grew disgusted with mankind and with myself, and I understood that this belief which I had accepted was a delusion. The strangest thing in all this was that, though I soon saw the falseness of this belief and renounced it, I did not renounce the position I had gained by it ; I still called myself a thinker, a poet, and a teacher. I was simple enough to imagine that I, the poet and thinker, was able to teach other men without



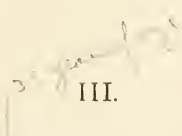
knowing myself what it was that I attempted to teach. I had only gained a new vice by my companionship with these men ; it had developed pride in me to a morbid extreme, and my self-confidence in teaching what I did not know amounted almost to insanity. When I now think over that time, and remember my own state of mind and that of these men (a state of mind common enough among thousands still), it seems to me pitiful, terrible, and ridiculous ; it excites the feelings which overcome us as we pass through a mad-house. We were all then convinced that it behoved us to speak, to write, and to print as fast as we could, as much as we could, and that on this depended the welfare of the human race. Hundreds of us wrote, printed, and taught, and all the while confuted and abused each other. Quite unconscious that we ourselves knew nothing, that to the simplest of all problems in life—what is right, and what is wrong—we had no answer, we all went on talking together without one to listen, at times abetting and praising one another on condition that we were abetted and praised in turn, and again turning upon each other in wrath—in short, we reproduced the scenes in a madhouse.

Hundreds of exhausted labourers worked day and night, putting up the type and printing millions of pages to be spread by the post all over Russia, and still we continued to teach, unable to teach enough, angrily complaining the while that we were not listened to. A strange state of things indeed, but now it is clear enough. The real motive that inspired all our reasoning was the desire for money and praise, to obtain which



we knew of no other means than writing books and newspapers. In order, however, while thus uselessly employed, to hold fast to the conviction that we were really of importance to society, it was necessary to justify our occupation to ourselves by another theory, and the following was the one we adopted: Whatever is, is right; everything that is, is due to development, and the latter again to civilization; the measure of civilization is the figure to which the publication of books and newspapers reaches; we are paid and honoured for the books and newspapers which we write, and we are therefore the most useful and best of all citizens.

This reasoning might have been conclusive, had we all been agreed; but, as for every opinion expressed by one of us there instantly appeared from another, one diametrically opposite, we had to hesitate before accepting it. But this we passed over; we received money, and were praised by those who agreed with us, consequently we were in the right. It is now clear to me that between ourselves and the inhabitants of a mad-house there was no difference: at the time I only vaguely suspected this, and, like all madmen, thought all were mad except myself.



### III.

I LIVED in this senseless manner another six years, up to the time of my marriage. During the interval I had been abroad. My life in Europe, and my acquaintance with many eminent and learned foreigners, confirmed my

belief in the doctrine of general perfectibility, as I found the same theory prevailed among them. This belief took the form which is common among most cultivated men of the day. It may be summed up in the word "progress." It then appeared to me this word had a real meaning. I did not understand that, tormented like other men by the question, "How was I to better my life?" when I answered that I must live for progress, I was only repeating the answer of a man, carried away in a boat by the waves and the wind, who to the one important question for him, "Where are we to steer?" should answer, saying, "We are being carried somewhere."

This I then did not see ; it was only at rare intervals that my feelings, and not my reason, were roused against the common superstition of our age, which leads men to ignore their own ignorance of life.

Thus, during my stay in Paris, the sight of a public execution revealed to me the weakness of my superstitious belief in progress. When I saw the head divided from the body, and heard the sound with which they fell separately into the box, I understood, not with my reason, but with my whole being, that no theory of the wisdom of all established things, nor of progress, could justify such an act ; and that, if all the men in the world from the day of creation, by whatever theory, had found this thing necessary, it was not so ; it was a bad thing, and that therefore I must judge of what was right and necessary, not by what men said and did, not by progress, but what I felt to be true in my heart.

Another instance of the insufficiency of this supersti-

tion of progress as a rule for life was the death of my brother. He fell ill while still young, suffered much during a whole year, and died in great pain. He was a man of good abilities, of a kind heart, and of a serious temper, but he died without understanding why he had lived, or what his death meant for him. No theories could give an answer to these questions, either to him or to me, during the whole period of his long and painful lingering. Then occasions for doubt, however, were few and far between; on the whole, I continued to live in the profession of the faith of progress. "Everything develops, and I myself develop as well; and why this is so will one day be apparent," was the formula I was obliged to adopt.

On my return from abroad I settled in the country, and occupied myself with the organization of schools for the peasantry. This occupation was especially grateful to me, because it was free from the spirit of falseness so evident to me in the career of a literary teacher.

Here again I acted in the name of progress, but this time I brought a spirit of critical inquiry to the system on which the progress rested. I said to myself that progress was often attempted in an irrational manner, and that it was necessary to leave a primitive people and the children of peasants perfectly free to choose the way of progress which they thought best. In reality I was still bent on the solution of the same impossible problem, how to teach without knowing what I had to teach. In the highest sphere of literature I had understood that it was impossible to do this

because I had seen that each taught differently, and that the teachers quarrelled among themselves, and scarcely succeeded in concealing their ignorance. Having now to deal with peasants' children, I thought that I could get over this difficulty by allowing the children to learn what they liked. It seems now absurd when I remember the expedients by which I carried out this whim of mine to teach, though I knew in my heart that I could teach nothing useful, because I myself did not know what was necessary.

After a year spent in this employment with the schools, I again went abroad, for the purpose of finding out how I was to teach under these conditions.

I believed that I had found a solution abroad, and armed with that conviction, I returned to Russia, the same year in which the peasants were freed from serfdom, and accepting the office of a country magistrate or arbitrator, I began to teach the uneducated people in the schools, and the educated classes in the journals which I published. Things seemed to be going on well, but I felt that my mind was not in a normal state and that a change was near. I might then, perhaps, have come to that state of absolute despair to which I was brought fifteen years later, if it had not been for a new experience in life which promised me safety—the home life of a family man. For a year I occupied myself with my duties as arbitrator, with the schools, and my newspaper, and got so involved that I was harassed to death; my arbitration was one continual struggle, what to do in the schools became less and less clear, and my newspaper shuffling more and more repugnant to me, always the

same thing—trying to teach without knowing how or what—so that I fell ill, more with a mental than physical sickness, gave up everything, and started for the steppes to breathe a fresher air, to drink mare's milk, and live a mere animal life.

Soon after my return I married. The new circumstances of a happy family life by which I was now surrounded completely led my mind away from the search after the meaning of life as a whole. My life was concentrated in my family, my wife, and children, and consequently in the care for increasing the means of supporting them. The effort to affect my own individual perfection, already replaced by the striving after general progress, was again changed into an effort to secure the particular happiness of my family. In this way fifteen years passed. Notwithstanding that during these fifteen years I looked upon the craft of authorship as a very trifling thing, I continued all the time to write. I had experienced the seductions of authorship, the temptations of an enormous pecuniary reward and of great applause for valueless work, and gave myself up to it as a means of improving my material position, and of stifling all the feelings which led me to question my own life and that of society for the meaning in them. In my writings I taught what for me was the only truth, that the object of life should be our own happiness and that of our family.

By this rule I lived ; but five years ago, a strange state of mind-torpor began at times to grow upon me. I had moments of perplexity, of a stoppage, as it were, of life, as if I did not know how I was to live, what I was to do.

I began to wander, and was a victim to low spirits. This, however, passed, and I continued to live as before. Later, these periods of perplexity grew more and more frequent, and invariably took the same form. During their continuance the same questions always presented themselves to me: "Why?" and "What after?"

At first it seemed to me that these were empty and unmeaning questions, that all they asked about was well known, and that whenever I wished to find answers to them I could do so without much trouble—then I had no time for it. But these questions presented themselves to my mind with ever-increasing frequency, demanding an answer with still greater and greater persistence, grouping themselves into one dark and ominous spot. It was with me as in every case of a hidden, mortal disease—at first the symptoms, as to its position, are slight, and are disregarded by the patient, while later they are repeated more and more frequently, till they end in a period of uninterrupted suffering. The sufferings increase, and the patient, before he has time to seek a remedy, is confronted with the fact that what he took for a mere indisposition has become more important to him than anything else on earth, that he is face to face with death.

This is exactly what happened mentally to myself. I became aware that this was not a mere passing phase of mental ill-health, that the symptoms were of the utmost importance, and that if these questions continued to recur I must find an answer to them. I tried to answer them. The questions seemed so foolish, so simple, so childish; but no sooner had I begun my attempt to decide

them, than I was convinced that they were neither childish nor silly, but were concerned with the deepest problems of life, and again that I was, think of them as I would, utterly unable to find an answer to them.

Before occupying myself with my estate, with the education of my son, with the writing of books, I was bound to know why I did these things. Till I know the reasons for my own acts, I can do nothing, I cannot live. While thinking of the details of the management of my household and estate, which in these days occupied much of my time, the following question came into my head: "Well, I have now six thousand 'desatins' in the government of Samara, and three hundred horses—what then?" I was quite disconcerted, and knew not what to think. Another time, dwelling on the thought of how I should educate my children, I asked myself, "*Why?*" Again, when considering by what means the well-being of the people might best be promoted, I suddenly exclaimed, "But what concern have I with it?" When I thought of the fame which my works had gained me, I used to say to myself, "Well, what if I should be more famous than Gogol, Poushkin, Shakespeare, Molière—than all the writers of the world—well, and what then?" I could find no reply. Such questions demand an answer, and an immediate one; without one it is impossible to live, but answer there was none.



## IV.

MY life had come to a sudden stop. I was able to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep. I could not, indeed, help doing so ; but there was no real life in me. I had not a single wish to strive for the fulfilment of what I could feel to be reasonable. If I wished for anything, I knew beforehand that, were I to satisfy the wish, nothing would come of it, I should still be dissatisfied. Had a fairy appeared and offered me all I desired, I should not have known what to say. If I seemed to have, at a given moment of excitement, not a wish, but a mood resulting from the tendencies of former wishes, at a calmer moment I knew that it was a delusion, that I really wished for nothing. I could not even wish to know the truth, because I guessed what the truth was.

The truth lay in this, that life had no meaning for me. Every day of life, every step in it, brought me nearer the edge of a precipice, whence I saw clearly the final ruin before me. To stop, to go back, were alike impossible ; nor could I shut my eyes so as not to see the suffering that alone awaited me, the death of all in me, even to annihilation. Thus I, a healthy and a happy man, was brought to feel that I could live no longer, that an irresistible force was dragging me down into the grave. I do not mean that I had an intention of committing suicide. The force that drew me away from life was stronger, fuller, and concerned with far wider consequences than any mere wish ; it was a force like that of my previous attachment to life, only in a con-



trary direction. The idea of suicide came as naturally to me as formerly that of bettering my life. It had so much attraction for me, that I was compelled to practise a species of self-deception, in order to avoid carrying it out too hastily. I was unwilling to act hastily, only because I had determined first to clear away the confusion of my thoughts, and, that once done, I could always kill myself. I was happy, yet I hid away a cord, to avoid being tempted to hang myself by it to one of the pegs between the cupboards of my study, where I undressed alone every evening, and ceased carrying a gun because it offered too easy a way of getting rid of life. I knew not what I wanted ; I was afraid of life ; I shrank from it, and yet there *was* something I hoped for from it.

Such was the condition I had come to, at a time when all the circumstances of my life were pre-eminently happy ones, and when I had not reached my fiftieth year. I had a good, a loving, and a well-beloved wife, good children, a fine estate, which, without much trouble on my part, continually increased my income ; I was more than ever respected by my friends and acquaintances ; I was praised by strangers, and could lay claim to having made my name famous without much self-deception. Moreover, my mind was neither deranged nor weakened ; on the contrary, I enjoyed a mental and physical strength which I have seldom found in men of my class and pursuits : I could keep up with a peasant in mowing, and could continue mental labour for ten hours at a stretch, without any evil consequences.

The mental state in which I then was seemed to me summed up in the following : my life was a foolish and wicked joke played upon me by I knew not whom. Notwithstanding my rejection of the idea of a Creator, that of a being who thus wickedly and foolishly made a joke of me, seemed to me the most natural of all conclusions, and the one that threw the most light upon my darkness. I instinctively reasoned that this being, wherever he might be, was one who was even then diverting himself at my expense, as he watched me, after from thirty to forty years of a life of study and development, of mental and bodily growth, with all my powers matured and having reached the point at which life as a whole should be best understood, standing like a fool with but one thing clear to me, that there was nothing in life, that there never was anything, and never will be. "To him I must seem ridiculous. . . . But was there, or was there not, such a being?" Neither way could I feel it helped me. I could not attribute reasonable motive to any single act, much less to my whole life. I was only astonished that this had not occurred to me before, from premises which had so long been known. Illness and death would come (indeed they had come), if not to-day, then to-morrow, to those whom I loved, to myself, and nothing would remain but stench and worms. All my acts, whatever I did, would sooner or later be forgotten, and I myself be nowhere. Why, then, busy one's self with anything? How could men see this, and live? It is possible to live only as long as life intoxicates us; as soon as we are sober again we see that it is all a delusion, and a stupid one! In this, indeed, there is

nothing either ludicrous or amusing, it is only cruel and absurd.

(There is an old Eastern fable about a traveller in the steppes who is attacked by a furious wild beast. To save himself the traveller gets into a dried-up well ; but at the bottom of it he sees a dragon with its jaws wide open to devour him. The unhappy man dares not get out for fear of the wild beast, and dares not descend for fear of the dragon, so he catches hold of the branch of a wild plant growing in a crevice of the well. His arms grow tired, and he feels that he must soon perish, death awaiting him on either side, but he still holds on ; and then he sees two mice, one black and one white, gnawing through the trunk of the wild plant as they gradually and evenly make their way round it. The plant must soon give way, break off, and he will fall into the jaws of the dragon. The traveller sees this, and knows that he must inevitably perish ; but, while still hanging, he looks around him, and finding some drops of honey on the leaves of the wild plant, he stretches out his tongue and licks them. )

Thus do I cling to the branch of life, knowing that the dragon of death inevitably awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I cannot understand why such tortures have fallen to my lot. I also strive to suck the honey which once comforted me, but it palls on my palate, while the white mouse and the black, day and night, gnaw through the branch to which I cling. I see the dragon too plainly—and the honey is no longer sweet. I see the dragon, from whom there is no escape, and the mice, and I cannot turn my eyes away from them.

It is no fable, but a living, undeniable truth, to be understood of all men. The former delusion of happiness in life, which hid from me the horror of the dragon, no longer deceives me.

However I may reason with myself that I cannot understand the meaning of life, that I must live without thinking, I cannot again begin to do so, because I have done so too long already. I cannot now help seeing that each day and each night, as it passes, brings me nearer to death. I can see but this, because this alone is true—all the rest is a lie. The two drops of honey, which more than anything else drew me away from the cruel truth, my love for my family and for my writings, to which latter I gave the name of art, no longer taste sweet to me. "My family," thought I; "but a family, a wife and children, are also human beings, and subject to the same conditions as myself; they must either be living in a lie, or they must see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love, care for, bring up, and watch over them? To bring them to the despair which fills myself, or to make dolts of them? As I love them, I cannot conceal from them the truth—every step they take in knowledge leads them to it—and that truth is death."

But art, then; but poetry? Under the influence of success and flattered by praise, I had long persuaded myself that these were things worth working for, notwithstanding the approach of death, the great destroyer, to annihilate my writings and the memory of them; but now I soon saw that this was only another delusion, I saw clearly that art is only the ornament and charm of

life. Life having lost its charm for me, how could I make others see a charm in it? While I was not living my own life, but one that was external to me, as long as I believed that life had a meaning, though I could not say what it was, life was reflected for me in the poetry and art which I loved, it was pleasant to me to look into the mirror of art ; but when I tried to discover the meaning of life, when I felt the necessity of living myself, the mirror became either unnecessary or painful. I could no longer take comfort from what I saw in the mirror, that my position was a stupid and desperate one.

It warmed my heart when I believed that life had a meaning, when the play of the light on the glass showed me all that was comic, tragic, touching, beautiful, and terrible in life, and comforted me ; but when I knew that life had no meaning at all, and was only terrible, the play of the light no longer amused me. No honey could be sweet upon my tongue, when I saw the dragon, and the mice eating away the stay which supported me. Nor was that all. Had I simply come to know that life has no meaning, I might have quietly accepted it as my allotted portion. I could not, however, remain thus unmoved. Had I been like a man in a wood, out of which he knows that there is no issue, I could have lived on ; but I was like a man lost in a wood, and who, terrified by the thought, rushes about trying to find a way out, and, though he knows each step can only lead him farther astray, cannot help running backwards and forwards.

It was this that was terrible, this which to get free from I was ready to kill myself. I felt a horror of what awaited me ; I knew that this horror was more terrible

than the position itself, but I could not patiently await the end. However persuasive the argument might be, that all the same something in the heart or elsewhere would burst and all be over, still I could not patiently await the end. The horror of the darkness was too great to bear, and I longed to free myself from it by a rope or a pistol ball. This was the feeling that, above all, drew me to think of suicide.

## V.

IT was possible, however, that I had overlooked something, that I had failed to understand something, and I often asked myself, if such a state of utter despair could be, what man was born to. I sought an explanation of the questions which tormented me in every branch of human knowledge ; I sought that explanation painfully and long, not out of mere curiosity nor apathetically, but obstinately day and night ; I sought it as a perishing man seeks safety, and I found nothing. My search not only failed, but I convinced myself that all those who had searched like myself had failed also, and come like me to the despairing conviction that the only absolute knowledge man can possess is this—that life is without a meaning. I sought in all directions, and, thanks to a life of study, and also to the footing which I had gained in learned society, all the sources of knowledge were open to me, not merely through books, but through personal intercourse. I had the advantage of all that learning could answer to the question, “What is life ?”

It was long before I could believe that human learning had no clear answer whatever to this question. It seemed to me, when I considered the importance which science attributed to so many theories unconnected with the problem of life, and the serious tone which pervaded her inquiries into them, that I must have misunderstood something. For a long time I was too timid to oppose the learning of the day, and I fancied that the insufficiency of the answers which I received was not its fault, but was owing to my own gross ignorance ; but this thing was not a joke to pass the time with me, but the business of my life, and I was at last forced to the conclusion, that these questions were just and necessary ones underlying all knowledge, and that it was not I that was in fault in putting them, but science in pretending to have an answer to them.

The question, which in my fiftieth year had brought me very close to suicide, was the simplest of all questions, one to make itself heard in the heart of every man, from undeveloped childhood to wisest old age ; a question without which, as I had myself experienced, life became impossible.

That question was as follows : "What result will there be from what I am doing now, and may do to-morrow? what will be the issue of my life?" Otherwise expressed, it may run : "Why should I live? why should I wish for anything? why should I do anything?" Again, in other words it is : "Is there any meaning in my life which can overcome the inevitable death awaiting me?"

To this question, one and the same though variously



expressed, I sought an answer in human knowledge, and I found that with respect to this question all human knowledge may be divided into two opposite hemispheres, with their respective poles, the one negative, the other affirmative, but that at neither end is to be found an answer to the problem of life. One system of knowledge seems to deny that there is such a question, but, on the other hand, has a clear and exact answer to all its own independent inquiries: it is the system of experimental science, at the extreme end of which is mathematics. Another system accepts the question, but does not answer it; it is that of theoretic philosophy, and at its extremity is metaphysics. I had been addicted from my youth to theoretical study; later, mathematics and the exact sciences had attracted me; and till I came to put clearly to myself this question as to the meaning of life, until it grew up in me, as it were, of itself, and till I felt that it demanded an immediate answer, I was content with the artificial and conventional answers given by learning.

For the practical side of life I used to say to myself, "All is development and differentiation, all tends to complication and perfection, and there are laws which govern this process. You are yourself a part of the whole. Learn as much as possible of this whole, and learn the law of its development, you will then know your own place in the great unity, and know yourself as well." Though I feel shame in confessing it, I must needs own that there was a time when I was myself developing—when my muscles and memory were strengthening, my power of thinking and understanding



on the increase—that I, feeling this, very naturally thought that the law of my own growth was the law of the universe and explained the meaning of my own life. But there came another time when I had ceased to grow, and I felt that I was not developing but drying up; my muscles grew weaker, my teeth began to fall out, and I saw that this law of growth, not only explained nothing, but that such a law did not and could not exist; that I had taken for a general law what only affected myself at a given age.

On looking more closely into the nature of this pretended law,\* it was clear to me that there could be no law of eternal development; that to say everything in infinite space and time is developed, complicated, differentiated, and perfected, is to talk nonsense. Such words have no meaning, for the infinite can know nothing of simple and compound, of past and future, of better and worse. It was a personal question that was of such importance to me, and which remained without an answer: "What am I myself with all my desires?" I understood that the acquirement of knowledge was interesting and attractive, but that it could only give clear and exact results in proportion to its inapplicability to the question of life. The less it had to do with these questions, the clearer and more exact it was; the more it took the character of a solution of these questions, the obscurer and less attractive they became. If we turn to those branches of knowledge in which men have tried to find a solution to the problem of life, to physiology, psychology, biology, sociology, we meet with a striking poverty of thought, with the greatest

obscurity, with an utterly unjustifiable pretension to decide questions beyond their competence, and a constant contradiction of one thinker by another, and even by himself. If we turn to the branches of knowledge which are not concerned with the problem of life, but find an answer to their own particular scientific questions, we are lost in admiration of man's mental powers ; but we know beforehand that we shall get no answer to our questions about life itself, for these branches of knowledge directly ignore all questions concerning it.

Those who profess them say, "We cannot tell you what you are and why you live ; such questions we do not study. But if you wish to know the laws of light, of chemical affinities, of the development of organisms ; if you wish to know the laws that govern different bodies, their form, and relations to number and size ; if you wish to know the laws of your own mind, we can give you clear, exact, and absolutely certain answers on every point." The relation of experimental science to the question of the meaning of life may be put as follows : Question, "Why do I live?" Answer, "Infinitely small particles, in infinite combinations, in endless space and endless time, eternally change their forms, and when you have learned the laws of these changes, you will know why you live." I used to say to myself when theorizing, "Spiritual causes lie at the root of man's life and development, and they are the ideals which govern him. These ideals find expression in religion, in science, in art, and in the forms of government, and rise higher, from one stage to another, till man at last reaches his highest good. I am myself a man, and am therefore

called upon to assist in making the ideals of humanity known and accepted."

In the days of my mental weakness this reasoning sufficed for me ; but as soon as the problem of life really, as it were, arose within me, the whole theory fell to pieces at once. Not to speak of the dishonest inaccuracy, by which learning of this kind is made to give as general results those due to the study of but a small part of mankind ; not to speak of the many contradictions among the various champions of this theory, as to what are the ideals of humanity ; the strangeness, if it be not the silliness, of this way of thinking is, that, in order to answer the question which occurs to every man—"What am I ?" or "Why do I live ?" or "What am I to do ?"—we must first answer this other question : "What is the life of that unknown quantity to us mankind, of which we are acquainted with but one minute part in one minute period of time ?"

In order to understand what he is himself, a man must first know what that mysterious humanity is, which is formed of other men like himself, and who again are ignorant of what they are.

I confess there was a time when I believed this. That was when I had my own cherished ideals which determined my caprices, and I would strive to evolve a theory which should enable me to look upon my fancies as a law belonging to humanity. As soon, however, as the question of the meaning of life made itself clearly felt within me, my theoretical answer was for ever confuted. I understood that, as in the experimental sciences there are real sciences, and semi-sciences which

pretend to give answers to questions beyond their competence, so in the province of theoretical knowledge is there a wide range of highly cultivated philosophy which attempts to do the same. The semi-sciences of this division, jurisprudence and historical sociology, endeavour to decide the questions concerning man and his life, by deciding, each in its own way, another question, that of the life of humanity as a whole.

But, as in the sphere of exact science, a man who earnestly seeks an answer to the question, "How am I to live?" cannot content himself with the answer, that if he studies in infinite space and time the endless combinations and changes of infinite particles, he will know what his own life means, so a sincere man cannot be satisfied with this other answer, "Study the life of humanity as a whole, and then, though we know neither its beginning nor its end, and are ignorant of its parts, you will know what your life means."

It is the same with these sham sciences as with the sham experimental ones; they contain obscurity, inaccuracy, stupidity, and contradiction, exactly in proportion to their divergence from their proper sphere. The problem of exact science is the succession of cause and effect in material phenomena. If exact science raises the question of a finite cause, it stumbles against an absurdity. The problem of theoretical science is the conception of the uncaused existence of life. Directly the question of the cause of phenomena is raised—as, for instance, of social and historical phenomena—theoretical science lands also in an absurdity. Experimental science gives positive results, and shows the grandeur of man's

intellect, only when it does not inquire into finite causes ; while, on the contrary, theoretical science only shows the greatness of man's mental powers, is only a science at all when it gets rid altogether of the succession of phenomena, and looks upon man only in relation to finite causes. Such in this department of science is the office of its most important branch, of the one which is the pole, as it were, of all the others, of metaphysics or philosophy.

This science puts the clear question, "What am I, and what is the whole world around me? Why do I and the world exist?" and it has always answered it in the same way. Whatever name the philosopher may give to the principle of life existing in me and in all other living beings, whether he call it an idea, a substance, a spirit, or a will, he still says ever, that it is a reality, and that I have a real existence ; but why this is so he does not know, and does not try to explain if he is an exact thinker.

I ask, "Why should this reality be? What comes of the fact that it is and will be?" Philosophy cannot answer, it can only itself put the same question. If it be, then, a true philosophy, its whole labour consists in this, that it should put this question clearly. If it keep firmly to its proper sphere, it can only answer the question, "What am I and the whole world around me?" by saying, "All and nothing," and to that other question, "Why?" by adding, "I do not know." Thus, however I examine and twist the theoretical replies of philosophy, I never receive an answer to my question ; and that, not as in the sphere of experimental knowledge,

because the answer does not relate to the question, but because here, although great mental labour has been applied directly to the question, there *is* no answer, and instead of one I get back my own question repeated in a more complicated form.

## VI.

IN my search for a solution of the problem of life I experienced the same feeling as a man who has lost himself in a wood. He comes to an open plain, climbs up a tree, and sees around him a space without end, but nowhere a house—he sees clearly that there can be none; he goes into the thick of the wood, into the darkness, and sees darkness, but again no house. Thus had I lost my way in the wood of human knowledge, in the twilight of mathematical and experimental science, which opened out for me a clear and distant horizon in the direction of which there could be no house, and in the darkness of philosophy, plunging me into a greater gloom with every step I took, until I was at last persuaded that there was, and could be, no issue. When I followed what seemed the bright light of learning, I saw that I had only turned aside from the real question. Notwithstanding the attraction of the distant horizon unfolded so clearly before me, notwithstanding the charm of losing myself in the infinity of knowledge, I saw that the clearer it was the less was it needed by me, the less did it give me an answer to my question.

I said to myself, “I know now all that science so

obstinately seeks to learn; but an answer to my question as to the meaning of my life is not to be obtained from science." I saw that philosophy, notwithstanding that, or perhaps because an answer to my question had become the direct object of its inquiries, gave no answer but the one I had given to myself, "What is the meaning of my life? It has none. Or what will come of my life? Nothing. Or why does all that is exist, and why do I exist? Because it does exist." When I turned to one branch of science, I obtained an endless number of exact answers to questions I had not proposed: about the chemical elements of the stars and planets, about the movement of the sun with the constellation of Hercules, on the origin of species and of man, about the infinitely small and weightless particles of ether; but the only answer to my question as to the meaning of my life was this, "You are what you call life; that is, a temporary and accidental agglomeration of particles. The mutual action and reaction of these particles on each other has produced what you call your life. This agglomeration will continue during a certain time, then the reciprocal action of these particles will cease, and with it ends what you call your life and all your questions as well. You are an accidentally combined lump of something. The lump undergoes decomposition, this decomposition men call life; the lump falls asunder, decomposition ceases, and with it all doubting." This is the answer from the clear and positive side of human knowledge, and if true to its own principles it can give no other.

Such an answer, however, is no answer to the ques-



tion at all. I want to know the meaning of my life, and, that it is an infinite particle, not only does not give a meaning to it, but destroys the possibility of a meaning. The compromise which experimental makes with theoretical science, when it is said that the meaning of life is development, and the efforts made towards its attainment, from its obscurity and inaccuracy cannot be considered an answer. The theoretical side of human knowledge, when it keeps firmly to its own principles, through all time has ever answered and still answers one and the same, "The world is something which is eternal and not to be understood. The life of man is an inconceivable part of this inconceivable whole."

Again I set aside all the compromises between theoretical and experimental science which are the product of the sham sciences, of so-called jurisprudence, of political economy, and of history. In these sciences we have again a false conception of development and perfection, with this difference, that formerly it was a development of everything, and now it is a development of human life. The inaccuracy is again the same; development and perfection in infinity can have no object, no direction, and therefore can give no answer to my question. Whenever theoretical knowledge is exact, where philosophy is true to itself, and does not simply serve, like what Schopenhauer calls "professorial philosophy," to divide all existing phenomena into new columns, and give to them new names—wherever the philosopher does not overlook the great question of all, the answer is always the same, the answer given by Socrates, Schopenhauer, Solomon, and Buddha. "We approach truth only



in the proportion as we are farther from life," said Socrates, when preparing to die. What do we who love truth seek in life? In order to be free from the body and all the ills that accompany life in it. If so, then, how shall we not be glad of the approach of death?

A wise man seeks death all his life, and death has no terrors for him. This is what Schopenhauer says: "Accept will as the ultimate principle of the universe, and in all phenomena, from the unconscious tendencies of the unknown forces of nature to the conscious activity of man, acknowledge only the objectivity of that will, and we still cannot get rid of this logical consequence, that directly that will uses its freedom to abdicate, to deny and destroy itself, all phenomena disappear with it, there is an end to the constant efforts and impulses now going on, without aim and without intermission, in every degree of the objectivity in which and through which the universe exists, there is an end to the varieties of successive forms, and with form vanish its postulates, space and time, even to the last and fundamental elements of form, the subject and the object. If there is no will, no phenomenal appearance, then there is no universe. The only thing that remains to us is nothing. But this passage to annihilation is opposed by our own nature, by our will to live, which causes our own existence and that of the universe. That we so fear annihilation, or, what is the same, that we so wish to live, only shows that we ourselves are nothing but that wish, and know nothing beyond it. Consequently, what remains to us after the annihilation of will, except will again, is assuredly nothing; on the other hand, for those in whom will has

destroyed itself, the whole of this material universe of ours, with all its suns and its milky ways—*is nothing*."

"Vanity of vanities," says Solomon, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. . . . The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

"I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. . . . I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this

also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom), and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not mine heart from any joy. . . . Then I looked on all the works my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

“And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly. . . . And I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. For there is no re-

membrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever ; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man ? as the fool.

“ Therefore I hated life ; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me : for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun : because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. . . . For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun ? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief ; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. . . .

“ All things come alike to all : there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked ; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean ; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not : as is the good, so is the sinner ; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all : yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

“ For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope : for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die : but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished ; neither

have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun."

Thus speaks Solomon, or the one who wrote the above; and this is what an Indian sage says: "Sakya Muni, the young and happy heir to a great throne, from whom had been kept the sight of illness, old age, and death, once while out driving saw a horrible-looking, toothless old man. The prince was much astonished, and asked the driver what it meant, and why the man was in such a pitiable and disgusting state. When he learned that this was the common lot of all men, and that he himself, prince and young though he was, must inevitably one day be the same, he was unable to continue his drive, and ordered the carriage to be driven home, that he might have time to think it all over. He shut himself up alone and thought it over. He probably thought of something which consoled him, for again he got into his carriage and drove off merry and happy. This time he is met by a sick man. He sees a worn-out, tottering man, who is quite blue in the face and has dim eyes. The prince stopped and asked what it was. When he was told that it was illness, that old men are subject to it, and he himself, young and happy prince though he was, might fall ill the next day, he again lost all desire for amusement, and gave orders to drive home. There he again sought peace of mind and probably found it, for soon after he started again, for the third time, in his carriage. This time, however, he saw something new also—some men were carrying something by. 'What is that?' 'A dead body.' 'What does a dead body mean?' asks the prince; and he is told that to

become one means to become what the man before him now is. The prince descends and approaches the body, uncovers it, and looks at it. 'What will become of him?' asks the prince. He is told that the body will be thrust into a hole dug in the earth. 'Why?' 'Because he will never be alive again, and only stench and worms can come from him.' 'And that is the lot of all men? And it will be so with me? I shall be put underground to stink and have worms come from me?' 'Yes.' 'Back! I will not go for the drive, and never will go again.'"

So Sakya Muni could find no comfort in life, and he decided that life was a very great evil, and applied all his energies to freeing himself and others from it, so that after death, life should in no way be renewed, and the very root of life should be destroyed. Thus speak all the Indian sages. Here we have the only direct answers which human wisdom can give to the problem of life. "The life of the body is evil and a lie, and so the annihilation of that life is a good for which we ought to wish," says Socrates.

Life is what it ought not to be; "an evil, and a passage from it into nothingness is the only good in life," says Schopenhauer. Everything in the world, both folly and wisdom, both riches and poverty, rejoicing and grief, all is vanity and worthless. Man dies and nothing is left of him, and this again is vanity, says Solomon.

"To live, knowing that sufferings, illness, old age, and death are inevitable, is not possible; we must get rid of life, get rid of the possibility of living," says Buddha.

And what these powerful minds have said, what millions on millions of men have thought and felt, has been thought and felt by me.

Thus my wanderings over the fields of knowledge not only failed to cure me of my despair, but increased it. One branch of knowledge gave no answer at all to the problem of life, another gave a direct answer which confirmed my despair, and showed that the state to which I had come was not the result of my going astray, of any mental disorder, but, on the contrary, of my thinking rightly, of my being in agreement with the conclusions of the most powerful intellects among mankind.

I could not be deceived. All was vanity. A misfortune to be born. Death was better than life, and life's burden must be got rid of.

## VII.

HAVING failed to find an explanation in knowledge, I began to seek it in life itself, hoping to find it in the men who surrounded me; and I began to watch men like myself, to observe how they lived, and how they practically treated the question which had brought me to despair.

And this is what I found among those of the same social position and culture as myself.

I found that for those who occupied the same position as myself there were four means of escape from the terrible state in which we all were.

The first means of escape is through ignorance. It



consists in not perceiving and understanding that life is an evil and an absurdity. People of this class—for the greater part women, or men who are either very young or very stupid—have not understood the problem of life as it presented itself to Schopenhauer, to Solomon, and to Buddha. They see neither the dragon awaiting them, nor the mice eating through the plant to which they cling, and they taste the drops of honey. But they only lick the honey for a time ; something directs their attention to the dragon and the mice, and there is an end to their tasting. From these I could learn nothing : we cannot unknow what we do know.

The second means of escape is the Epicurean. It consists in, while we know the hopelessness of life, taking advantage of every good there is in it, in avoiding the sight of the dragon and mice, and in seeking the honey as best we can, especially wherever there is most of it. Solomon points out this issue from the difficulty thus : "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry : for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him, under the sun. . . . Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart. . . . Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity : for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."



Such is the way in which most people, who belong to the circle in which I move, reconcile themselves to their fate, and make living possible. They know more of the good than the evil of life from the circumstances of their position, and their blunted moral perceptions enable them to forget that all their advantages are accidental, and that all men cannot have harems and palaces, like Solomon; that for one man who has a thousand wives there are thousands of men who have none, and for each palace there must be thousands of men to build it with the sweat of their brow, and that the same chance which has made me a Solomon to-day may make me Solomon's slave to-morrow. The dulness of their imagination enables these men to forget what destroyed the peace of Buddha, the inevitable sickness, old age, and death, which, if not to-day, then to-morrow, must be the end of all their pleasures.

Thus think and feel the majority of the men of our time of the upper classes. That some of them call their dulness of thought and imagination by the name of positive philosophy, does not, in my opinion, separate them from those who, in order not to see the real question, search for and lick the honey. I could not imitate such as these; my imagination not being blunted like theirs, I could not artificially prevent its action. Like every man who really lives, I could not turn my eyes aside from the mice and the dragon, when I had once seen them.

The third means of escape is through strength and energy of character. It consists in destroying life, when we have perceived that it is an evil and an absurdity.

Only men of strong and unswerving character act thus. Understanding all the stupidity of the joke that is played with us, and understanding far better the happiness of the dead than of the living, they put an end at once to the parody of life, and bless any means of doing it—a rope round the neck, water, a knife in the heart, or a railway train. The number of those in my own class who thus act, continually increases, and those who do this are generally in the prime of life, with their physical strength matured and unweakened, and with but few of the habits that undermine man's intellectual powers yet formed. I saw that this means of escape was the worthiest, and wished to make use of it.

The fourth means of escape is through weakness. It consists, though the evil and absurdity of life are well known, in continuing to drag on, though aware that nothing can come of it. People of this class of mind know that death is better than life, but have not the strength of character to act as their reason dictates, to have done with deceit and kill themselves; they seem to be waiting for something to happen. This way of escape is due solely to weakness, for if I know what is better, and it is within my reach, why not seize it? To this class of men I myself belonged.

Thus do those of my own class, in four different ways, save themselves from a terrible contradiction. With the most earnest intellectual efforts I could not find a fifth way. One way is, to ignore life's being a meaningless jumble of vanity and evil, not to know that it is better not to live. For me not to know this was impossible, and when I once saw the truth I could not shut my eyes

to it. Another way is, to make the best of life as it is without thinking of the future. This, again, I could not do. I, like Sakya Muni, could not drive to the pleasure-ground, when I knew of the existence of old age, suffering, and death. My imagination was too lively for that. Moreover, my heart was ungladdened by the passing joys which fell for a few rare instants to my lot. The third way is, knowing that life is an evil and a foolish thing, to put an end to it, to kill one's self. I understood this, but still did not kill myself. The fourth way is, to accept life as described by Solomon and Schopenhauer, to know that it is a stupid and ridiculous joke, and yet live on, to wash, dress, dine, talk, and even write books. This position was painful and disgusting to me, but I remained in it.

I now see that I did not kill myself because I had, in a confused sort of way, an inkling that my ideas were wrong. However persuasive and unanswerable the idea, which I shared with the wisest on earth, that life has no meaning, appeared to me, I still felt a confused doubt in the truth of my conclusions, which formed itself thus: "My reason tells me that life is contrary to reason. If there is nothing higher than reason (and there is nothing), reason is the creator of my life; were there no reason, there would be no life for me. How can it be that reason denies life, and is at the same time its creator? Again, from the other side, if there were no life, I should have no reason, consequently reason is born of life, and life is all. Reason is the product of life, and yet it denies life." I felt that something here was wrong. I said to myself: "Life undoubtedly has no meaning, and

is evil, but I have lived and am still alive, and so also have lived and are living the whole human race. How is it, then? Why do all men live, when all men are able to die? Is it that I and Schopenhauer alone are wise enough to have understood the unmeaning emptiness and evil of life?"

To see the inanity of life is a simple matter enough, and it has long been apparent to the simplest among us, but men still live on. Yes, men live on, and never think of calling in question the reasonableness of life!

My acquired knowledge, confirmed by the wisdom of the wisest of the world, showed me that everything on earth, organic or inorganic, was arranged with extraordinary wisdom, and that my own position alone was a foolish one. But, all the same, the enormous masses of those fools, my fellow-men, know nothing of the organic or inorganic structure of the world, but live on, and it seems to them that their lives are subjected to perfectly reasonable conditions!

Then I thought to myself: "But what if there be something more for me to know? Surely this is the way in which ignorance acts. Why, it always says exactly what I do now! What men are ignorant of they say is stupid. It really comes to this, that mankind as a whole have always lived, and are living, as if they understood the meaning of life, for not doing so they could not live at all, and yet I say, that all this life has no meaning in it and that I cannot live."

Nobody prevents our denial of life by suicide, but then, kill yourself and you will no longer argue about it. If you dislike life, kill yourself. If in your life you

cannot find a reason for it, put an end to it, and do not go on talking and writing about being unable to understand life. You have got into a gay company, in which all are well satisfied, all know what they are doing, and you alone are wearied and repelled, then get out of it!

And after all, then, what are we who, persuaded of the necessity of suicide, still cannot bring ourselves to the act, but weak, inconsistent men, to speak more plainly, stupid men, who carry about with them their stupidity, as the fool carries his name written upon his cap?

Our wisdom, indeed, however firmly it be grounded on truth, has not imparted to us a knowledge of the meaning of life, yet all the millions that share in the life of humanity do not doubt that life has a meaning.

It is certainly true that, from the far-distant time when that life began of which even I know something, men lived who, though they knew what proved to me that life had no meaning, the argument of its inanity, still lived on, and gave to life a meaning of their own. Since any sort of life began for men, they have had some conception of their own about it, and have so lived down to my own time. All that is in and around me, physical or immaterial, it is all the fruit of their knowledge of life. The very mental instruments which I have employed against that life, to condemn it, were fashioned, not by me, but by them. I was born, and bred, and have grown up, thanks to them. They dug out the iron, taught how to hew down the forests, to tame the cows and the horses, to sow corn, to live one with another, they gave order and form to our life; moreover, they

taught me how to think and how to speak. And I, the work of their hands, their foster-child, the pupil of their thoughts and sayings, have proved to them they themselves had no meaning! "There must be something here," said I, "that is wrong. I have made some mistake." I could not, however, discover where the mistake lay.

### VIII.

ALL these doubts, which I am now able to express more or less clearly, I could not have then explained. I then only felt that, despite the logical certainty of my conclusions as to the inanity of life, and confirmed as they were by the greatest thinkers, there was something wrong in them. Whether in the conclusion itself, or in the way of putting the question, I did not know; I only felt that, though my reason was entirely convinced, that was not enough. All my reasoning could not induce me to act in accordance with my convictions, *i.e.* to kill myself. I should not speak the truth, if I said that my reason alone brought me to the position in which I was. Reason had been at work no doubt, but something else had worked too, something which I can only call an instinctive consciousness of life. There also worked in me a force, which determined my attention to one thing rather than to another, and it was this that drew me out of my desperate position, and completely changed the current of my thoughts. This force led me to the idea, that I, with thousands of other men like me, did not form the whole of mankind, that I was still ignorant of what human life was.

When I watched the restricted circle of those who were my equals in social position, I saw only people who did not understand the question, people who kept down their understanding of it by the excitement of life, people who understood it and put an end to life, and people who, understanding, lived on through weakness, in despair. And I saw no others. It seemed to me that the small circle of learned, rich, and idle people, to which I myself belonged, formed the whole of humanity, and that the millions living outside it were animals not men.

However strange, improbable, and inconceivable it now seems to me, that I, reasoning about life, could overlook the life of mankind surrounding me on all sides, and fall into such an error as to think that the life of a Solomon, a Schopenhauer, and my own was alone real and fit, and the life lived by unconsidered millions, a circumstance unworthy of attention—however strange this appears to me now, I see that it was so then. Led away by intellectual pride, it seemed to me not to be doubted that I, with Solomon and Schopenhauer, had put the question so exactly and truly that there could be no other form of it ; it seemed unquestionable that all these millions of men had failed to conceive the depth of the question, that I had sought the meaning of my life ; and it never once occurred to me to think, “ But what meaning has been given, what meaning is given now, by the millions of those who have lived and are living on earth ? ”

I long lived in this state of mental aberration, which, though its theories are not always openly professed, is not the less common among those who are supposed to



be the most learned and most liberal part of society. But whether, thanks to my strange kind of instinctive affection for the labouring classes, which impelled me to understand them, and to see that they are not so stupid as we think, or thanks to the sincerity of my conviction that I could know nothing beyond the advisability of hanging myself, I felt that, if I wished to live and understand the meaning of life, I must seek it not amongst those who have lost their grasp on it, and wish to kill themselves, but among the millions of the living and the dead, who have made our life what it is, and on whom now rests the burden of our life and their own.

So I watched the life common to such enormous numbers of the dead and the living, the life of simple, unlearned, and poor men, and found something quite different. I saw that all these millions, with rare exceptions, did not come under any division of the classification which I had made ; I could not count them among those who do not understand the question, because they not only put it but answer it very clearly ; to count them among the Epicureans I was also unable, because their life has far more of privation and suffering than of enjoyment ; to count them amongst those who, against their reason, live through a life without meaning, was still less possible, because every act of their lives, and death itself, is explained by them. Self-murder they look upon as the greatest of evils. It appeared that throughout mankind there was a sense given to the meaning of life which I had neglected and despised. It came to this, that the knowledge based on reason denied a meaning to life, and declined to make it a subject of



inquiry, while the meaning given by the millions that form the great whole of humanity was founded on a despised and fallacious knowledge.

The knowledge based on reason, the knowledge of the learned and the wise, denies a meaning in life, and the great mass of all the rest of mankind have an unreasoning consciousness of life which gives a meaning to it.

This unreasoning knowledge is the faith which I could not but reject. This is God, one and yet three ; this is the creation in six days, the devils and the angels ; and all that I cannot, while I keep my senses, understand. My position was a terrible one. I knew that from the knowledge which reason has given man, I could get nothing but the denial of life, and from faith nothing but the denial of reason, which last was even more impossible than the denial of life. The result of the former was, that life is an evil and that men know it to be one, that men may cease to live if they will, but that they always go on living—I myself lived on, though I had long known that life had no sense nor good in it. The result of the latter was that, in order to understand the meaning of life, I must abandon the guide without which there can be no meaning in anything, my reason itself.

## IX.

I WAS stopped by a contradiction which could only be explained in two ways : either what I called reasonable was not so reasonable as I thought it, or what I called unreasonable was not so unreasonable as I thought it.

I began by verifying the process of thinking through which I had been led to the conclusions of reasoning knowledge.

On doing this I found the process complete without a flaw. The conclusion, that life was nothing, was inevitable; but I discovered a mistake. The mistake was, that I had not confined my thoughts to the question proposed. The question was, why should I live, *i.e.*, what of real and imperishable will come of my shadowy and perishable life—what meaning has my finite existence in the infinite universe? And I had tried to answer this by studying life.

It was evident that the decision of any number of questions concerning life could not satisfy me, because my question, however simple it seemed at first, included the necessity of explaining infinity by infinity, and the contrary. I asked myself, what meaning my life had apart from time, causation, and space. After long and earnest efforts of thinking, I could only answer—none at all.

Through all my reasoning with myself I constantly compared, and I could not do otherwise, the finite with the finite, and the infinite with the infinite, and the conclusion was consequently inevitable: a force is a force, matter is matter, will is will, infinity is infinity, nothing is nothing—and beyond that there was no result. It was like what happens in mathematics, when instead of an equation to resolve we get identical terms. The process of solution is correct, but our answer is  $a = a$ ,  $x = x$ , or  $0 = 0$ . This happened to me in my inquiries into the meaning of my life.

The answers given by science to the question were all "identity."

Strict scientific inquiry, like that carried on by Descartes, begins undoubtedly with a doubt of everything, throws aside all knowledge founded on belief, and reconstructs all in accordance with the laws of reason and experience, while it can give but one answer to the question about the meaning of life, the one which I myself obtained—an indefinite one. It seemed to me at first that science did give a positive answer, the answer of Schopenhauer: life has no meaning, it is an evil; but, when I inquired more closely into the matter, I perceived that the answer was not positive, that it was my own feeling alone made me think it so. The answer is expressed in the same terms as is that of the Brahmins, of Solomon, and of Schopenhauer, and is only an indefinite one, the identity of 0 and 0, life is nothing. This philosophical knowledge denies nothing, but answers that the question cannot be decided by it, that the matter remains indefinite.

When I had come to this conclusion, I understood that it was useless to seek an answer to my question from scientific knowledge, because the latter only shows that no answer can be obtained till the question is put differently, till the question be made to include the relation between the finite and the infinite. I also understood that, however unreasonable and monstrous the answers given by faith, they do bring in the relation of the finite to the infinite.

However the question, How am I to live? be put, the same answer is obtained—by the law of God. Will

anything real and positive come of my life, and what? Eternal torment, or eternal bliss. Is there a meaning in life not to be destroyed by death, and, if so, what? Union with an infinite God, paradise.

In this way I was compelled to admit that, besides the reasoning knowledge which I once thought the only true knowledge, there was in every living man another kind of knowledge, an unreasoning one, but which gives a possibility of living—faith.

All the unreasonableness of faith remained for me the same as ever, but I could not but confess that faith alone gave man an answer as to the meaning of life, and the consequent possibility of living.

When scientific reasoning brought me to the conclusion that my life had no meaning, life stood still in me, and I wished to end it. When I looked at the men around me, at humanity as a whole, I saw that men did live, and that they affirmed their knowledge as to the meaning of life. For other men, as for myself, faith gave a possibility of living and a meaning to life.

On examining life in other countries than my own, as well among my contemporaries as among those who have passed away, I found it but one and the same. From the beginning of the human race, wherever there is life there is the faith which makes life possible, and everywhere the leading characteristics of that faith are the same.

Whatever answers any kind of faith ever gives to any one, every one of these answers clothes with infinity the finite existence of man, gives a meaning to life which triumphs over suffering, privation, and death. In faith,

therefore, alone is found a possibility of living and a meaning in life. What is this faith? I understood that faith is not only the apprehension of things unseen, is not only a revelation (that is only a definition of one of the signs of faith), is not the relation of man to God (faith must first be determined, and then God, and not faith through God), and is not, as it has so often been understood, acquiescence—faith is the knowledge of the meaning of man's life, through which man does not destroy himself, but lives. Faith is the force of life.

If a man lives, he believes in something. If he did not believe that there was something to live for, he would not live. If he does not see and understand the unreality of the finite, he believes in the finite; if he sees that unreality, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith there is no life.

I then went back upon all the past stages of my mental state, and was terrified. It was now clear to me, that for any one to live it was necessary for him, either to be ignorant of infinity, or to accept an explanation of the meaning of life which should equalize the finite and the infinite. Such an explanation I had, but I had no need of it while I believed in the finite, and I began to apply to my explanation the tests of reason, and in the light of the latter all former explanations were shown to be worthless. But the time when I ceased to believe in the finite passed, and I tried to raise my mental structure on the foundation, that I knew an explanation which gave a meaning to life, but I tried in vain. Like so many of the greatest minds of earth, I came only to the conclusion that  $0 = 0$ , and, though nothing else could

have come of it, I was much astonished to have obtained such an answer to my problem.

What did I do, when I sought an answer in the study of experimental science? I wanted to know why I lived, and to that end I studied everything outside myself. Clearly in this way I might learn much, but nothing of that which I needed.

What did I do, when I sought an answer in the study of philosophy? I studied the thoughts of others in the same position as myself, and who had no answer to the question—what is life? Clearly I could in this way learn nothing but what I myself knew, namely, that it was impossible to know anything.

What am I?—a part of the infinite whole. In those few words lay the whole problem.

Could it be that men had only now begun to put this question to themselves? Could it be that no one before myself had asked this simple question, that must occur even to the mind of an intelligent child?

Since man has been on earth this question has to a certainty been put, and to a certainty it has been understood, that the decision of this question is equally unsatisfactory, whether the finite be compared with the finite, and the infinite with the infinite, or the solution sought and expressed in the relation of the finite to the infinite.

All these conceptions of the equality of the finite and the infinite, through which we receive the ideas of life, of God, of freedom, of good, when we submit them to logical analysis, will not bear the tests of reason.

If it were not so terrible, it would be laughable to

think of the pride and self-confidence with which we, like children, pull out our watches, take away the spring, make a plaything of them, and are then astonished that they will no longer keep time.

The decision of the contradiction between the finite and the infinite, and such an answer to the question of what is life, as shall enable us to live, is wanted by and is dear to us. The only answer is the one to be found everywhere, always, and among all nations, an answer which has come down to us from the times in which the origin of human life is lost, an answer so difficult that we could never ourselves have come to it—this answer we in our careless indifference get rid of, by again raising the question which presents itself to every one, but which no one can answer.

The conception of an infinite God, of the divinity of the soul, of the way in which the affairs of men are related to God, of the unity and reality of the spirit, man's conception of moral good and evil, these are conceptions worked out through the infinite mental labours of mankind ; conceptions without which there would be no life, without which I should not myself exist, and yet I dare to reject the labours of the whole human race, and to venture on working out the problem again in my own way alone.

I did not at the time think so, but the germs of these thoughts were already within me. I understood (1) that the position assumed by Schopenhauer, Solomon, and myself, with all our wisdom, was a foolish one : we understand that life is an evil, and yet we live. This clearly is foolish, because if life is foolish, and I care so



much for reason, life should be put an end to, and then there would be no one to deny it. (2) I understood that all our arguments turned in a charmed circle, like a cog-wheel the teeth of which no longer catch in another. However much and however well we reason, we get no answer to our question, it will always be  $0 = 0$ , and consequently our method is probably wrong. (3) I began to understand that in the answers given by faith was to be found the deepest source of human wisdom, that I had no reasonable right to reject them, and that they alone solved the problem of life.

## X.

I UNDERSTOOD what I have just stated, but my heart was none the lighter for it.

I was now ready to accept any faith that did not require of me a direct denial of reason, for that would be to act a lie ; and I studied the books of the Buddhists and the Mahometans, and especially also Christianity, both in its writings and in the lives of its professors around me.

I naturally turned my attention at first to the believers in my own immediate circle, to learned men, to orthodox divines, to the elders among the monks, to the teachers of a new shade of doctrine, the so-called New Christians, who preach salvation through faith in a Redeemer. I seized upon these believers, and demanded from them what they believed in, and what for them gave a meaning to life.



Notwithstanding that I made every possible concession, that I avoided all disputes, I could not accept the faith of these men. I saw that what they called their faith did not explain but obscured the meaning of life, and that they professed it, not in order to answer the question as to life which had attracted me towards faith, but for some other purpose to which I was a stranger.

I remember how terribly I felt the return of the old feeling of despair, after the hopes with which my connection with these people had from time to time inspired me.

The more minutely they laid their doctrines before me, the more clearly I perceived their error, the more I lost all hope of finding in their faith an explanation of the meaning of life.

I was not so much alienated by the unnecessary and unreasonable doctrines which they had mingled with the Christian truths always so dear to me, as by the fact that their lives were like my own, the only difference being that they did not live according to the doctrines which they professed. I felt that they deceived themselves, and that for them, as for myself, the only meaning of life was to live from hand to mouth, and take each for himself all that his hands can lay hold on. I saw this, because had the ideas of life which they conceived done away with fear, privation, suffering, and death, they would not have feared them. But these believers of my own class, the same as I myself, lived in comfort and abundance, struggled to increase and preserve it, were afraid of privation, suffering, and death ; and again, like

myself and all other not true believers, satisfied the lusts of the flesh, and led lives as evil as, if not worse than, those of infidels themselves.

No arguments were able to convince me of the sincerity of the faith of these men. Only actions, proving their conception of life to have destroyed that fear of poverty, illness, and death so strong in myself, could have convinced me, and such actions among them I could not see. Such actions I saw, indeed, among the open infidels of my own class in life, but never among its so-called believers.

I understood, then, that the faith of these men was not the faith which I sought, that it was no faith at all, but only an Epicurean consolation. I understood that this faith, if it could not really console, could at least soothe the repentant mind of a Solomon on his death-bed, but that it could not serve the enormous majority of mankind, who are born, not to be comforted by the labours of others, but to create a life for themselves. For mankind to live, for it to continue to live and be conscious of the meaning of its life, all these millions must have another and a true conception of faith. It was not, then, that I, Solomon, and Schopenhauer had not killed ourselves, which convinced me that faith existed, but that these millions have lived and are now living, carrying along with them on the impulse of their life, both Solomon and ourselves.

I began to draw nearer to the believers among the poor, the simple, and the ignorant, the pilgrims, the monks, the sectaries, and the peasants. The doctrines of these men of the people, like those of the pretended

believers of my own class, were Christian. Here also much that was superstitious was mingled with the truths of Christianity, but with this difference, that the superstition of the believers of my own class was not needed by them, and never influenced their lives beyond serving as a kind of Epicurean distraction, while the superstition of the believing labouring class was so interwoven with their lives that it was impossible to conceive them without it—it was a necessary condition of their living at all. The whole life of the believers of my own class was in flat contradiction with their faith, and the whole life of the believers of the people was a confirmation of the meaning of life which their faith gave them.

Thus I began to study the lives and the doctrines of the people, and the more I studied, the more I became convinced that a true faith was among them, that their faith was for them a necessary thing, and alone gave them a meaning in life and a possibility of living. In direct opposition to what I saw in my own circle—the possibility of living without faith, and not one in a thousand who professed himself a believer—amongst the people there was not in thousands a single unbeliever. In direct opposition to what I saw in my own circle—a whole life spent in idleness, amusement, and dissatisfaction with life—I saw among the people whole lives passed in heavy labour and unrepining content. In direct opposition to what I saw in my own circle—men resisting and indignant with the privations and sufferings of their lot—the people unhesitatingly and unresistingly accepting illness and sorrow, in the quiet and firm conviction that all was for the best. In contradiction to

the theory, that the less learned we are the less we understand the meaning of life, and see in our sufferings and death but an evil joke, these men of the people live, suffer, and draw near to death, in quiet confidence and oftenest with joy. In contradiction to the fact that an easy death, without terror or despair, is a rare exception in my own class, a death which is uneasy, rebellious, and sorrowful is among the people the rarest exception of all. These men, deprived of all that for us and for Solomon makes the only good in life, experience the highest happiness both in amount and kind. I looked more carefully and more widely around me, I studied the lives of the past and contemporary masses of humanity, and I saw that, not two or three, not ten or a hundred, but thousands and millions had so understood the meaning of life, that they were able both to live and to die. All these men, infinitely divided by manners, powers of mind, education, and position, all alike in opposition to my ignorance, were well acquainted with the meaning of life and of death, quietly laboured, endured privation and suffering, lived and died, and saw in all this, not a vain, but a good thing.

I began to grow attached to these men. The more I learned of their lives, the lives of the living and of the dead of whom I read and heard, the more I liked them, and the easier I felt it so to live. I lived in this way during two years, and then there came a change which had long been preparing in me, and the symptoms of which I had always dimly felt: the life of my own circle of rich and learned men, not only became repulsive, but lost all meaning whatever. All our actions, our reason-

ing, our science and art, all appeared to me in a new light. I understood that it was all child's play, that it was useless to seek a meaning in it. The life of the working classes, of the whole of mankind, of those that create life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that this was life itself, and that the meaning given to this life was a true one, and I accepted it.

## XI.

WHEN I remembered how these very doctrines had repelled me, how senseless they had seemed, when professed by men whose lives were spent in opposition to them, and how they had attracted me and seemed thoroughly reasonable, when I saw men living in accordance with them, I understood why I had once rejected them and thought them unmeaning, why I now adopted them and thought them most reasonable. I understood that I had erred, and how I had erred. I had erred, not so much through having thought incorrectly, as through having lived ill. I understood that the truth had been hidden from me, not so much because I had erred in my reasoning, as because I had led the exceptional life of an epicure bent on satisfying the lusts of the flesh. I understood that my question as to what my life was, and the answer, an evil, were in accordance with the truth of things. The mistake lay in my having applied an answer which only concerned myself to life in general. I had asked what my own life was, and the answer was, an evil and a thing without meaning. Exactly

so, my life was but a long indulgence of my passions, it was a thing without meaning, an evil; and such an answer, therefore, referred only to my own life, and not to human life in general.

I understood the truth which I afterwards found in the Gospel; "That men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every man that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." I understood that, for the meaning of life to be understood, it was first necessary that life should be something more than an evil and unmeaning thing discovered by the light of reason. I understood why I had so long been near to, without apprehending this self-evident truth, and that if we would judge and speak of the life of mankind, we must take that life as a whole, and not merely certain parasitic adjuncts to it.

This truth was always a truth, as  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , but I had not accepted it, because, besides acknowledging  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , I should have acknowledged that I was evil. It was of more importance to me to feel that I was good, more binding on me, than to believe  $2 \times 2 = 4$ . I loved good men, I hated myself, and I accepted truth. Now it was all clear to me. What if the executioner, who passes his life in torturing and cutting off heads, or a confirmed drunkard asked himself the question, What is life? he could but get the same answer as a madman would give, who had shut himself up for life in a darkened chamber, and who believed that he would perish if he left it; and that answer could but be—Life is a monstrous evil.

The answer would be a true one, but only for the man who gave it. Here, then, was I such a madman? Were all of us, rich, clever, idle men, mad like this? I understood at last that we were ; that I, at any rate, was. Look at the birds ; they live but to fly, to pick up their food, to build their nests, and when I see them doing this their gladness rejoices me. The goat, the hare, the wolf live but to feed and multiply, and bring up their young ; and when I see them doing this, I am well convinced of their happiness, and that their life is a reasonable one. What, then, should man do? He also must gain his living like the animals, but with this difference, that he will perish if he attempt it alone ; he must labour, not for himself, but for all. And when he does so, I am firmly convinced he is happy, and his life is a reasonable one.

What had I done during my thirty years of conscious life? I had not only not helped the life of others, I had done nothing for my own. I had lived the life of a parasite, and contented myself with my ignorance of the reason why I lived at all. If the meaning of the life of man lies in his having to work out his life himself, how could I, who during thirty years had done my best to ruin my own life and that of others, expect to receive any other answer to my questioning of life but this, that my life was an evil and had no meaning in it? It was an evil ; it was without meaning.

The life of the world goes on through the will of some one. Some one makes our own life and that of the universe his own inscrutable care. To have a hope of understanding what that will means, we must first carry



it out, we must do what is required of us. Unless I do what is required of me, I can never know what that may be, and much less know what is required of us all and of the whole universe.

If a naked, hungry beggar be taken from the cross-roads into an enclosed space in a splendid establishment, to be well clothed and fed, and made to work a handle up and down, it is evident that the beggar, before seeking to know why he has been taken, why he must work the handle, whether the arrangements of the establishment are reasonable or not, must first do as he is directed. If he do so he will find that the handle works a pump, the pump draws up water, and the water flows into numerous channels for watering the earth. He will then be taken from the well and set to other work ; he will gather fruits and enter into the joy of his lord. As he passes from less to more important labours, he will understand better and better the arrangements of the whole establishment ; and he will take his share in them without once stopping to ask why he is there, nor will he ever think of reproaching the lord of that place.

And thus it is with those that do the will of their master ; no reproaches come from simple and ignorant working men, from those whom we look upon as brutes. But we the while, wise men that we are, devour the goods of the master, and do nothing of that which he wills us to do ; but instead, seat ourselves in a circle to argue why we should move the handle, for that seems to us stupid. And when we have thought it all out, what is our conclusion ? Why, that the master is stupid, or



that there is none, while we ourselves are wise, only we feel that we are fit for nothing, and that we must somehow or other get rid of ourselves.

## XII.

MY conviction of the error into which all knowledge based on reason must fall assisted me in freeing myself from the seductions of idle reasoning. The conviction that a knowledge of truth can only be gained by living, led me to doubt the justness of my own life ; but I had only to get out of my own particular groove, and look around me to observe the simple life of the real working class, to understand that such a life was the only real one. I understood that, if I wished to understand life and its meaning, I must live, not the life of a parasite, but a real life, and, accepting the meaning given to it by the combined lives of those that really form the great human whole, submit it to a close examination.

At the time I am speaking of, the following was my position.

During the whole of that year, when I was constantly asking myself, whether I should or should not put an end to it all with a cord or a pistol, during the time that my mind was occupied with the thoughts which I have described, my heart was oppressed by a tormenting feeling, which I cannot describe otherwise than as a searching after God.

This search after a God was not an act of my reason, but a feeling, and I say this advisedly, because it

was opposed to my way of thinking, it came from the heart. It was a feeling of dread, of orphanhood, of isolation amid things all apart from me, and of hope in a help I knew not from whom. Though I was well convinced of the impossibility of proving the existence of God—Kant had shown me, and I had thoroughly grasped his reasoning, that this did not admit of proof—I still sought to find a God, still hoped to do so, and still, from the force of former habits, addressed myself to one in prayer. Him whom I sought, however, I did not find.

At times I went over in my mind the arguments of Kant and of Schopenhauer, showing the impossibility of proving the existence of the Deity ; at times I began to refute their reasoning.

I would say to myself, that causation is not in the same category as thought and space and time. If I am, there is a cause of my being, and that the cause of all causes. That cause of all things is what is called God ; and I dwelt upon this idea, and strove with all the force that was in me to reach a consciousness of the presence of this cause.

No sooner was I conscious of a power over me, than I felt a possibility of living. Then I asked myself : "What is this cause, this power ? How am I to think of it ? What is my relation to what I call God ?" And only the old familiar answer came into my mind, "He is the creator, the giver of all." This answer did not satisfy me, and I felt that the staff of life failed me, I fell into great fear, and began to pray to Him whom I sought, that He would help me. But the more I prayed, the clearer it became that I was not heard, that

there was no one to whom to pray. With despair in my heart that there was no God, I cried : " Lord, have mercy on me, and save ! O Lord, my God, teach me ! " But no one had mercy on me, and I felt that life stood still within me.

Again and again, however, the conviction came back to me that I could not have appeared on earth without any motive or meaning, that I could not be such a fledgling dropped from a nest as I felt myself to be. What if I wail, as the fallen fledgling does on its back in the grass ? It is because I know that a mother bore me, cared for me, fed me, and loved me. Where is that mother ? If I have been thrown out, then who threw me ? I cannot but see that some one who loved me brought me into being. Who is that some one ? Again the same answer, God. He knows and sees my search, my despair, my struggle. " He is," I said to myself. I had only to admit that for an instant, to feel that life re-arose in me, to feel the possibility of existing and the joy of it. Then, again, from the conviction of the existence of God, I passed to the consideration of our relation towards Him, and again I had before me the triune God, our Creator, who sent His Son, the Redeemer. Again, I felt this to be a thing apart from me and from the world. This God melted, as ice melts, from before my eyes ; again there was nothing left, again the source of life dried up. I fell once more into despair, and felt that I had nothing to do but to kill myself, while, worst of all, I felt also that I should never do it.

I went through these changes of conviction and mood, not once, not twice, but hundreds of times, now

joy and excitement, now despair from the knowledge of the impossibility of life.

I remember one day in the early spring-time I was listening to the sounds of a wood, and thinking only of one thing, the same of which I had constantly thought for two years—I was again seeking for a God.

I said to myself: "It is well, there is no God, there is none that has a reality apart from my own imaginings, none as real as my own life—there is none such. Nothing, no miracles can prove there is, for miracles only exist in my own unreasonable imagination."

And then I asked myself: "But my conception of the God whom I seek, whence comes it?" And again life flashed joyously through my veins. All around me seemed to revive, to have a new meaning. My joy, though, did not last long, for reason continued its work: "The conception of God, is not God. Conception is what goes on within myself; the conception of God is an idea which I am able to rouse in my mind or not as I choose, it is not what I seek, something without which life could not be." Then again all seemed to die around and within me, and again I wished to kill myself.

After this I began to retrace the process which had gone on within myself, the hundred times repeated discouragement and revival. I remembered that I had lived only when I believed in a God. As it was before, so it was now; I had only to know God, and I lived; I had only to forget Him, not to believe in Him, and I died. What was this discouragement and revival? I do not live when I lose faith in the existence of a God; I should long ago have killed myself, if I had not had a dim hope

of finding Him. I only really live when I feel and seek Him. "What more, then, do I seek?" A voice seemed to cry within me, "This is He, He without whom there is no life. To know God and to live are one. God is life."

Live to seek God, and life will not be without Him. And stronger than ever rose up life within and around me, and the light that then shone never left me again.

Thus I was saved from self-murder. When and how this change in me took place I could not say. As gradually, imperceptibly as life had decayed in me, till I reached the impossibility of living, till life stood still, and I longed to kill myself, so gradually and imperceptibly I felt the glow and strength of life return to me.

It was strange, but this feeling of the glow of life was no new sensation, it was old enough, for I had been led away by it in the earlier part of my life. I returned, as it were, to the past, to childhood and my youth. I returned to faith in that Will which brought me into being and which required something of me ; I returned to the belief that the one single aim of life should be to become better, that is, to live in accordance with that Will ; I returned to the idea that the expression of that Will was to be found in what, in the dim obscurity of the past, the great human unity had fashioned for its own guidance ; in other words, I returned to a belief in God, in moral perfectibility, and in the tradition which gives a meaning to life. The difference was, that formerly I had unconsciously accepted this, whereas now I knew that without it I could not live.

The state of mind in which I then was may be likened to the following. It was as if I had suddenly found myself sitting in a boat which had been pushed off from some shore unknown to me, had been shown the direction of the opposite shore, had had oars given me, and had been left alone. I use the oars as best I can and row on ; but the farther I go towards the centre, the stronger becomes the current which carries me out of my course, and the oftener I meet other navigators, like myself, carried away by the stream. There are here and there solitary sailors who row hard, there are others who have thrown down their oars, there are large boats, and enormous ships crowded with men ; some struggle against the stream, others glide on with it. The farther I get, the more, as I watch the long line floating down the current, I forget the course pointed out to me as my own. In the very middle of the stream, beset by the crowd of boats and vessels, and carried like them along, I forget altogether in what direction I started, and abandon my oars. From all sides the joyful and exulting navigators, as they row, or sail down stream, with one voice cry out to me that there can be no other direction. I believe them, and let myself go with them. I am carried far, so far that I hear the roar of the rapids in which I must perish, and I already see boats that have been broken up within them. Then I come to myself. It is long before I clearly comprehend what has happened. I see before me nothing but destruction. I am hurrying towards it ; what, then, must I do ? On looking back, however, I perceive a countless multitude of boats engaged in a ceaseless struggle against the force of the

torrent, and then I remember all about the shore, the oars, and the course, and at once I begin to row hard up the stream and again towards the shore.

The shore is God, the course tradition, the oars are the free-will given me to make for the shore, to seek union with the Deity. And thus the vital force was renewed in me, and I began again to live.

### XIII.

I RENOUNCED the life of my own class, for I had come to confess that it was not a real life, only the semblance of one, that its superfluous luxury prevented the possibility of understanding life, and that in order to do so I must know, not an exceptional parasitic life, but the simple life of the working classes, the life which fashions that of the world, and gives it the meaning which the working classes accept. The simple labouring men around me were the Russian people, and I turned to this people and to the meaning which it gives to life.

This meaning may, perhaps, be expressed as follows.

We have all of us come on earth by the will of God, and God has so created man that each of us is able to ruin or to save his soul. The problem of man's life being to save his soul, he must live after God's word ; to live after God's word, he must renounce all the pleasures of life, labour, be humble, endure, and be charitable to all men. This to the people is the meaning of the whole system of faith, as it has come down to them through, and is now given them by, the pastors of



their Church and the traditions which exist among them.

This meaning was clear to me, and dear to my heart. This popular faith, however, among the non-sectarian communities in which I moved, was inextricably bound up with something else so incapable of being explained that it repelled me. I mean the sacraments of the Church, the fasts, and the bowing before relics and images. The people were unable to separate these things, and no more could I. Though many things belonging to the faith of the people appeared strange to me, I accepted everything, I attended the Church services, prayed morning and evening, fasted, prepared for the communion; and while doing all this, for the first time felt that my reason found nothing to object to. What had formerly seemed to me impossible, now roused not the slightest opposition in me.

The position which I occupied with relation to questions of faith had become quite different to what it once was. Formerly life itself had seemed to me full of meaning, and faith an arbitrary assertion of certain useless and unreasonable propositions which had no direct bearing on life. I had tried to find out their meaning; and once convinced they had none, had thrown them aside. Now, on the contrary, I knew for certain that my life had not, and could not have, any meaning, and that the propositions of faith, not only appeared no longer useless to me, but had been shown, beyond dispute by my own experience, to be that which alone gave a meaning to life. Formerly I looked upon them as a worthless, illegible scrawl; now I did not understand



them, but knew that they had a meaning, and resolved to find it out.

I reasoned thus: Faith springs, like man and his reason, from the mysterious first cause. That cause is God, in whom begin the body and the mind of man. As my body proceeded through successive gradations from God to me, so have my reason and my conception of life proceeded from Him, and consequently the steps of this process of development cannot be false. All that men sincerely believe in must be true; it may be differently expressed, but it cannot be a lie, and consequently, if it seem to me a lie, that must be because I do not understand it.

Again, I said to myself: The true office of faith is to give a meaning to life which death cannot destroy. It is only natural that, for faith to give an answer to the question of the king dying amid every luxury, of the old and labour-worn slave, of the unthinking child, of the aged sage, of the half-witted old woman, of the happy girl full of the strong passions of youth, of all of both sexes under all possible differences of position and education, it is only natural that, if there be but one answer to the one eternally repeated question—"Why do I live, and what will come of my life?"—the answer, though one and the same in reality, should be infinitely varied in its form; that in exact proportion to its unvarying unity, to its truth, and its depth, it should appear strange, and even monstrous, in the attempts to find due expression which are owing to the bringing up and the social state of each individual answerer. But this reasoning, which justified the oddities of the ritual

side of faith, was insufficient to make me feel that I had a right, in a matter like faith, now become the one business of my life, to take part in acts of which I still am doubtful. I ardently desired to be one with the people, and conform to the rites which they practised, but I could not do it. I felt that I should lie to myself, and mock what I held most sacred, if I did this thing. At this point our new Russian theologians came to my assistance.

According to the explanation of these divines, the fundamental dogma of faith is the infallibility of the Church. From the acceptance of this dogma follows, as a necessary consequence, the truth of all that is taught by the Church. The Church, as the assembly of believers united in love, and consequently possessing true knowledge, becomes the foundation of my faith. I argued that the truth which is in God cannot be attained by any one man, it can only be reached by the union of all men through love. In order to attain the truth, we must not go each his own way; and to avoid division, we must have love one to the other, and bear with things which we do not agree with. Truth is revealed in love, and therefore, if we do not obey the ordinances of the Church, we destroy love, and make it impossible for us to know truth.

At the time I did not perceive the sophism involved in this reasoning. I did not then see that union through love may develop love to the highest degree, but can never give the truth that comes from God, as stated in the words of the Nicene Creed, that love can never make any particular form of creed binding on all

believers. I did not then see error in this reasoning, and, thanks to it, I was able to accept and practise all the rites of the Orthodox Church, but without understanding the greater part of them. I struggled earnestly to set aside all reasoning, all contradictions, and endeavoured to explain as reasonably as I could all the doctrines of the Church which presented any difficulty.

While thus fulfilling the ordinances of the Church, I submitted my reason to the tradition adopted by the mass of my fellow-men. I united myself to my ancestors, to my beloved father, mother, and grandparents. They, and all before them, lived, and believed, and brought me into being. I joined the millions of the people whom I loved. Moreover, there was nothing bad in all this, for bad with me meant the indulgence of the lusts of the flesh. When I got up early to attend divine service, I knew that I did well, were it only because, for the sake of a closer union with my ancestors and contemporaries, I tamed my intellectual pride, and, in order to seek for a meaning in life, sacrificed my bodily comfort. It was the same with preparing for the communion, the daily reading of prayers, the bowing to the ground, and the observance of all the fasts. However insignificant the sacrifices were, they were made in a good cause. I prepared for the communion, fasted, and observed regular hours for prayer both at home and at church. While listening to the Church service, I weighed every word, and gave it a meaning whenever I could. At mass the words which appeared to me to have most importance were the following: "Let us love one another in unity."

What follows—the confession of belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—I passed over, because I could not understand it.

#### XIV.

IT was so necessary for me at that time to believe in order to live, that I unconsciously concealed from myself the contradictions and the obscurities in the commonly received doctrines.

This interpretation of the sense of the ritual had, however, its limits. Though the leading points of the Liturgy became clearer and clearer to me; though I gave a kind of meaning to such expressions as “Remembering our Sovereign Lady, the most Holy Mother of God, and all the Saints, let us devote ourselves, each other, and our whole lives to the Christ God;” though I explained the frequent repetition of prayers for the Emperor and his family by the fact that they were more exposed to temptation than others, and were therefore more in need of prayer, and the prayers for victory over our enemies and opponents to mean victory over the principle of evil, nevertheless the hymn of the Cherubim, the preparation of the bread and wine, the adoration of the Virgin—in short, two-thirds of the whole service—either remained for me without an explanation at all, or made me feel that the only one I could apply to them was false, while to lie was to break off my connection with God, and lose utterly the possibility of believing.

I felt the same at the celebration of the principal Church holidays. I could understand the seventh day the consecration of a day to communion with God. The great holiday, however, was in remembrance of the Resurrection, the reality of which I could neither imagine nor understand. It was this which gave a name to the holiday in each week, to the Sunday, to the day on which the sacrament of the Eucharist was given, a mystery which to me was utterly inconceivable. The other twelve holidays, with the exception of Christmas, were all in remembrance of miracles, which I tried not to think of in order not to deny: the Ascension, Pentecost, Epiphany, the Intercession of the Virgin, and so on. On the ~~se~~ holidays I felt that the greatest importance was given to what I believed to be of the least, and I either held fast to the explanation which quieted me most, or else shut my eyes so as not to see what disquieted me.

This feeling came upon me strongest whenever I took part in the most ordinary, and generally considered the most important sacraments, as christening and the Holy Communion. Here I had to do with nothing difficult, but with what was easy to be understood: such acts appeared to me a delusion, and I was on the horns of a dilemma—to lie, or to reject.

I shall never forget the painful feeling I experienced when I took the communion for the first time after many years. The service, the confession, the prayers, all this was understood by me, and produced the glad conviction that the meaning of life lay open to me. The communion I explained to myself as an action done in

remembrance of Christ, and as signifying a cleansing from sin and a complete acceptance of Christ's teaching. If this explanation was an artificial one, I at least did not perceive it. It was such happiness for me to humble myself with a quiet heart before the priest, a simple and mild old man, and repenting of my sins, to lay bare all the past troubles of my soul ; it was such happiness to be united in spirit with the meek Fathers of the Church who composed these prayers ; such happiness to be one with all who have believed and who do believe, that I could not feel my explanation was an artificial one. But when I drew near to the altar, and the priest called upon me to repeat that I believed that what I was about to swallow was the real body and blood, I felt a sharp pain at the heart ; it was no unconsidered word, it was the hard demand of one who could never have known what faith was.

I now allow myself to say that it was a hard demand, but then I did not think so ; it was only exquisitely painful. I no longer thought, as I had done in my youth, that all was clear in life ; I had been drawn towards faith because outside it I had found nothing but ruin, and as therefore I could not throw faith aside, I had believed and submitted. I had found in my heart a feeling of humility and meekness which had helped me to do this. I humbled myself again, I swallowed the blood and the body without any mocking thoughts in the wish to believe, but the shock had been given, and knowing what awaited me another time, I could never go again.

I still continued an exact observance of the rites of

the Church, and I still believed that the doctrines I followed were true ; and then there happened to me a thing which now is clear enough, but which then appeared to me very strange.

I once listened to the discourse of an unlettered peasant pilgrim. He spoke of God, of faith, of life, and of salvation, and a knowledge of what faith was seemed opened to me.

I went amongst the people, familiarizing myself with their ideas of life and faith, and the truth became clearer and clearer to me. It was the same when I read the "Martyrology" and the "Prologues ;" they became my favourite books. With the exception of the miracles, and looking upon these as fables to bring out forcibly the thought, the reading of these books revealed to me the meaning of life. There I found the lives of Macarius the Great ; of Tosaph the Prince (the story of Buddha) ; the discourses of St. Chrysostom ; the story of the traveller in the well ; of the Monk who found gold ; of Peter the Publican ;—this is the history of the martyrs, of those who have all testified the same, that life does not end with death ; here we have the story of unlettered foolish men, who knew nothing of the doctrines of the Church.

But no sooner did I mix with learned believers, or consult their books, than doubts, uncasiness, and the bitterness of dispute came over me, and I felt that the more I studied their discourses the more I wandered from the truth, the nearer I came to the precipice.



## XV.

How often have I not envied the peasant, unable to read or write, his lack of learning. The very doctrines of faith which to me were nonsense, contained for him nothing that was false ; he was able to accept them and to believe in truth, the same truth in which I believed ; while to me, unhappy one, it was clear that truth was connected with falsehood by the finest threads of difference, and that I could not receive it in such a form.

In this condition I lived for three years, and when I first, like a new convert, little by little drew nearer to truth, and, led by an instinct, groped my way to the light, these obstacles seemed to me less formidable. When I failed to understand anything, I said, "I am wrong, I am wicked." But the more I became imbued with the spirit of the truths which I studied, the more surely I saw them to be the substratum of life, the greater and more formidable became the obstacles, the more clearly defined the line which I was unable to understand, and of which I could only seek an explanation through lying unto myself.

Notwithstanding all my doubts and sufferings, I still remained in the Orthodox Church ; but practical questions arose which required immediate decision, and the decisions of the Church, contrary to the elementary principles of the faith by which I lived, compelled me finally to abandon all communion with it.

The questions were, in the first place, the relation of the Orthodox Church to other Churches, to Catholicism



and the so-called Sectaries. The interest which I took in this great question of faith led me at this time to form acquaintance with the professors of different creeds, Catholics, Protestants, Old Believers, New Dissenters, and others, and among them I found many who sincerely believed and obeyed the highest moral standard. I desired to be a brother to these men, and what came of it? The doctrines which had seemed to promise me the union of all men in faith and love, in the persons of their best representatives, showed themselves but capable of educating men in a lie; resulted but in this, that what gives them strength to live is a temptation of the devil, the belief that they alone possess the possibility of knowing truth.

And I saw that the members of the Orthodox Church consider all those who do not profess the same faith as themselves to be heretics, exactly as Catholics and others account our Orthodoxy to be heresy; I saw that all consider others who do not adopt the same outward symbols and the same formulas of faith as themselves as their enemies. The Orthodox Church does this, though she tries to conceal it; and it must be so, in the first place, because the assertion that you live a lie and I am in the truth is the hardest thing that one man can say to another; in the second place, because a man who loves his children and his relations cannot but feel at enmity with those who desire to convert them to another faith. Moreover, this enmity increases as men learn more of the particular doctrines which they adopt. Thus I, who had believed faith was to be found in the union of love, was unwillingly forced

to see that the doctrines of faith destroy the very thing which they should produce.

This snare is so evident, to men living like ourselves in countries where differing faiths are professed, and witnessing the contempt and self-confidence with which the Catholic absolutely rejects Protestantism and Orthodoxy, repaid by the scorn of the Orthodox for the Catholic and the Protestant, and that of the latter for both the others, while the same relation of enmity includes the Old Believers, the Revivalists, the Shakers, and all other creeds, that at first it perplexes us.

We say to ourselves, "No, it cannot be so simple as that, and yet these men have not seen, that when two propositions flatly contradict each other the truth on which faith should rest is in neither. There must be some cause for this, there must be some explanation." I myself thought there was, and sought for it. I read everything I could get on the subject, and consulted with as many as I could, but the only explanation I obtained was that of the hussar, who accounts his regiment the first in the world, while his friend the lancer says the same of his own. The clergy of all religions, the best among them, all told me of their belief that they alone were right and all others wrong, and that all they could do for those who were in error was to pray for them. I went to the Archimandrites, the Archbishops, the Priors, and the Monks, and asked them, but no one made the slightest attempt to explain this snare to me but one, and his explanation was such that I put no more questions to any one.

I said that, for every unbeliever who returns to belief

(in which category I place the whole of the present young generation) the principal question is, Why is truth to be found in the Orthodox Church and not in the Lutheran nor the Catholic one? He is taught in his gymnasium, and he cannot but know, what the peasant is ignorant of, that Protestants and Catholics equally affirm their own faith to be the only true one. Historical proofs, twisted by each party to serve their own purpose, are insufficient.

Is it not possible, as I have already said, for a higher knowledge to issue from the disappearance of these differences, as they do already disappear for those who sincerely believe? Can we not go farther on our way to meet the Old Believers? They affirm that our way of signing the cross, of singing hallelujah, and of moving round the altar, is not the same as theirs. We say, "You believe in the Nicene Creed, in all the sacraments, and we also believe." Let us add, "Keep to that, and for the rest do as you will." We shall then be united to them by this, that we both place the essential points of faith above the unessential. Again, can we not say to Catholics, "You believe in certain things which are essential, and for what concerns the dispute about the procession of the Trinity and the Pope, do as you please"? Can we not say the same to the Protestant, and unite with him in what is really important? My fellow-disputant agreed with me, but added that such concessions draw down the reproach that the clergy have receded from the faith of their forefathers and favour dissent, while the office of those in authority in the Church is to preserve the purity of

the Russian Greek Orthodox faith as handed down from our ancestors.

Then I understood it all. I am in search of faith, the staff and strength of life, while these men seek the best means of fulfilling in the sight of men certain human obligations, and having to deal with earthly affairs they fulfil them as ordinary men ever do. However much they may talk of their pity for the errors of their brethren, of praying for them at the throne of the Most High, for earthly affairs force is needed, and force always has been, is, and will be applied. If two religious sects each believe that truth resides in themselves, and that the faith of the other is a lie, they will preach their doctrines in the hope of converting their brethren to the truth, and, if false doctrines are taught to the inexperienced sons of the Church who still tread in the ways of truth, she cannot but burn the books and banish the men who seduce her sons. What can be done with the Sectaries who, in their enthusiasm for a faith which the Church pronounces false, seduce her sons? What can be done with them, but to cut off their heads or imprison them? In the time of Alexis Michaelovitch men were burnt at the stake; in other words, the severest punishment of the time was applied, and in our days also the severest punishment is applied, men are condemned to solitary confinement. When I looked around me at all that was done in the name of religion, I was horrified, and almost entirely withdrew from the Orthodox Church.

The second point which concerned the relations of the Church to the problems of life was her connection

with war and executions. It was the time of the war in Russia. Russians slew their brethren in the name of Christian love. Not to think of this was impossible. Not to see that murder is an evil, contrary to the very first principles of every faith, was impossible. In the churches, however, men prayed for the success of our arms, and the teachers of religion accepted these murders as acts which were the consequence of faith. Not only murder in actual warfare was approved, but, during the troubles which ensued, the authorities of the Church, her teachers, monks, and ascetics, approved the murder of erring and helpless youths. I looked round on all that was done by men who professed to be Christians, and I was horrified.

## XVI.

I CEASED from this time to doubt, and became firmly convinced that all was not truth in the faith which I had joined. Formerly I should have said that all in this faith was false, but now it was impossible to say so.

That the men of the people had a knowledge of truth was incontestable, for otherwise they could not live. Moreover, this knowledge of truth was open to me; I already lived by it, and felt all its force, but in that same knowledge there was also error. Of that again I could not doubt. All, however, that had formerly repelled me now presented itself in a vivid light. Although I saw that there was less of what had repelled me as false among the people than among the representatives of the

Church, I also saw that in the belief of the people what was false was mingled with what was true.

Whence, then, came this truth and this falsehood? Both the falsehood and the truth came to them from what is called the Church; both are included in the so-called sacred traditions and writings. I was thus, whether I would or not, brought to the study and analysis of these writings and traditions, a study which, up to that time, I had feared, and I turned to the study of theology, which I had once thrown aside with contempt as useless. Then theology had seemed to me but profitless trifling with nonsense, for I was surrounded by the phenomena of life, and I thought them clear and full of meaning; now I should have been glad to throw off ideas unsuited to a healthy state of mind, but I could not.

On this doctrinal basis was founded, or at least with it was very intimately bound up, the only explanation of the meaning of the life I had so lately discovered. However strange it might seem to my worn but practised intellect, it was the only hope of salvation. To be understood, it must be cautiously and carefully examined, even though the result might not be the certain knowledge of science, which, aware as I was of the special character of religious inquiry, I did not, and could not seek to obtain.

I would not attempt to explain everything. I knew that the explanation of the whole, like the beginning of all things, was hidden in infinity. I wished to be brought to the inevitable limit where the incomprehensible begins; I wished that what remained uncom-

prehended should be so, not because the mental impulse to inquiry was not just and natural (all such impulses are, and without them I could understand nothing), but because I had learned the limits of my own mind. I wished to understand so that every unexplained proposition should appear to my reason necessarily unexplainable, and not an obligatory part of belief. I never doubted that the doctrines contained both truth and falsehood, and I was bound to separate the one from the other. I began to do this. What I found of false and of true, and to what results I came, forms the second part of this work, which, if it be thought worth while, and if it can be useful to any one, will probably be some day published.

1879.

The above was written by me three years ago.

The other day, on looking over this part again, on returning to the succession of ideas and feelings through which I had passed while writing it, I saw a dream.

This dream repeated for me in a condensed form all that I had lived through and described, and I therefore think that a description of it may, for those who have understood me, serve to render clearer, to refresh the remembrance of, and to collect into one whole, all that has been described at so much length in these pages. The dream was as follows.

I am lying on my back in bed, and I feel neither particularly well and comfortable, nor the contrary. I begin to think whether it is well for me to lie, and something makes me feel uncomfortable in the legs; if the



bed be too short or ill-made, I know not, but something is not right. I move my legs about, and at the same time begin to think how and on what I am lying, a thing which previously had never troubled me. I examine the bed, and see that I am lying on a network of cords fastened to the sides of the bedstead. My heels lie on one of these cords, my legs on another, and this is uncomfortable. I am somehow aware that the cords can be moved, and with my legs I push the cord away, and it seems to me that thus it will be easier. But I had pushed the cord too far ; I try to catch it with my legs, but this movement causes another cord to slip from under me, and my legs hang down. I move my body to get right again, convinced that it will be easy, but this movement causes other cords to slip and change their places beneath me, and I perceive that my position is altogether worse ; my whole body sinks and hangs without my legs touching the ground. I hold myself up only by the upper part of the back, and I feel now not only discomfort, but horror. I now begin to ask myself what I had not thought of before. I ask myself where I am, and on what I am lying. I begin to look round, and first I look below, to the place towards which my body sank, and where I feel it must soon fall. I look below, and I cannot believe my eyes.

I am on a height far above that of the highest tower or mountain, a height beyond all my previous powers of conception. I cannot even make out whether I see anything or not below me, in the depths of that bottomless abyss over which I am hanging and into which I feel drawn. My heart ceases to beat, and



horror fills my mind. To look down is too terrible. I feel that if I look down I shall slip from the last cord and perish. I stop looking, but not to look is still worse, for then I think of what will at once happen to me when the last cord breaks. I feel that I am losing in my terror the last remnant of my strength, and that my back is gradually sinking lower and lower. Another instant, and I shall fall.

Then all at once came into my mind the thought that it could not be true, that it was a dream ; I will awake. I strive to wake myself and cannot. "What can I do?" I ask myself, and as I put the question I look above.

Above stretches another gulf. I look into this, and try to forget the abyss below, and I do forget. The infinite depth repels and horrifies me ; the infinite height attracts and satisfies me. I still hang on the last cords which have not yet slipped from under me over the precipice ; I know that I am hanging thus, but I look only upwards, and my fear leaves me. As happens in dreams, I hear a voice saying, "Look well ; it is there!" I pierce farther and farther into the infinity above, and I feel that it calms me. I remember all that has happened—how I moved my legs, how I was left hanging in air, how I was terrified, and how I was saved from my fears by looking above. I ask myself, "And now, am I not hanging still?" and I feel in all my limbs, without looking, the support by which I am held. I perceive that I no longer hang nor fall, but have a fast hold. I question myself how it is that I hold on. I touch myself, I look around, and I see

that under the middle of my body there passes a stay, and on looking up I find that I am lying perfectly balanced, and that it was this stay alone that held me up before. As it happens in dreams, the mechanism by which I am supported appears perfectly natural to me, a thing to be easily understood, and not to be doubted, although this mechanism has no apparent sense when I am awake. In my sleep I was even astonished that I had not understood this before. At my bedside stands a pillar, the solidity of which is beyond doubt, though there is nothing for it to stand upon. From this pillar runs a cord, somehow cunningly and simply fixed, and if I lie across this cord and look upwards, there cannot be even a question of my falling. All this was clear to me, and I was glad and easy in my mind. It seemed as if some one said to me, "See that you remember!" And I awoke.

1882.

LEO TOLSTOI.

PART II.  
WHAT I BELIEVE.



## WHAT I BELIEVE.

WHEN I reached the age of fifty-five years, with the exception of the fourteen or fifteen years of childhood, I had been for thirty-five years a Nihilist in the true sense of that word, that is to say, not a socialist or a revolutionist, as it is generally understood, but a Nihilist in the sense that I had no religious belief.

Five years ago I began to believe in the teaching of Christ, and my life was suddenly changed. I ceased to care for that which I had previously desired, and began to long for what I had once not cared for. What had formerly seemed to me good, seemed bad, and what had seemed bad, seemed good. It happened to me as it might happen to a man, who, having left his home on business, should suddenly find the business to be unnecessary, and go home again. All that stood to his right now stands to his left ; all that was to the left is now to the right. His former wish to be as far from home as possible, has changed into the wish to be near it. The tendency of my life and all my desires became different : good and evil changed places. All this came from my understanding the teaching of Christ otherwise than I had formerly understood it.

I do not wish to be taken as an interpreter of Christ's

teaching ; I only wish to relate how I have come to understand what is simplest in that teaching, what is clearest, most comprehensible, surest, and of most universal application, and how this understanding has affected the foundations of my mind, and given me quiet and happiness.

I do not wish to explain the teaching of Christ ; but desire only to deprecate special explanation of any kind.

All Christian Churches have always accepted that all men, unequal in learning and intellect, the wise and the foolish, are equal before God ; that God's truth is attainable by one and all. Christ has said even, that it is God's will to make clear to the foolish what is hidden from the wise.

Into the deep mysteries of dogmatic, patristic, liturgic, apologetic, and other similar writings few can be initiated ; but all can and ought to understand what Christ has spoken to all the millions of the simple and the unwise who have lived and are living on the earth. Just this, which Christ spoke to all the simple folk who never had an opportunity of asking for an explanation of his teaching from a Paul, a Clement, or a Chrysostom—just this I once did not understand, and now, having understood, just this I wish to tell to all.

The thief on the cross believed and was saved. Would it, indeed, have been a bad thing, a thing hurtful to any one, had the thief not died on the cross, but descended from it and related how he believed in Christ ?

I too, like the thief on the cross, believed the teaching of Christ and was saved. And this is no far-fetched comparison, but the most exact representation of that

mental state of despair and horror at the problem of life and death in which I once found myself, of that condition of peace and happiness in which I live now.

I, like the thief, knew that I had lived and was living ill, that the majority of men around me led the same life. I also, like the thief, knew that I was unhappy and suffering, and that around me others were also unhappy and suffering ; and I saw no issue but death alone. I also, like the thief, was nailed by some force or other to a cross—to an evil and suffering life. And, as the terrible darkness of death after the countless agonies and ills of life awaited the thief, so the same awaited me. In all this I was exactly like the thief : the difference between myself and him was this, that he was dying and I was still alive. The thief could believe that his salvation was there, beyond the grave ; but I could not be satisfied with that, because, besides the life beyond the grave, there was yet before me a life here. I did not comprehend that life ; it seemed to me terrible. Then suddenly I heard the words of Christ ; I understood them ; and life and death ceased to appear evil to me. Instead of despair I felt the joy and happiness of life, never to be destroyed by death.

Surely it can harm no one if I relate how this happened with me.

## I.

MY former misapprehension of the teaching of Christ, how and whence the knowledge came to me, I have explained in two long works—a criticism of dogmatic theology, and a new translation and harmony of the Four Gospels. In these two works I have endeavoured systematically and step by step to examine everything that may hide the truth from men, and verse by verse to translate, compare, and incorporate the Four Narratives.

For six years this has been my work. Every year, every month, I find more, and again more doubts made clear, fresh confirmations of the fundamental idea. I correct the faults which have arisen from haste or over-eagerness, and revise what has been already done. My life, of which there cannot be much left, will probably be ended before my work ; but that work I am convinced is wanted, and while life remains, I shall do what I can.

So much for my material labour on the theology of the Gospels. But my internal, spiritual labour, of which I wish to speak here, has been different. It has been no systematic investigation of the theology and the text of the Gospels.

It has been to me the instantaneous removal of all misconception and obstruction, the instantaneous lustre of the divine light of truth. I was as a man who, from an incorrect drawing, strives to puzzle out the meaning of a confused heap of marble fragments, when some larger piece suddenly reveals the fact that the statue differs totally from what he had anticipated, and then



reuniting the fragments, he sees, as piece by piece the parts grow to a whole, the gradual confirmation of his idea. This is what happened to me: this is what I wish to tell.

I wish to tell how I found that key to the understanding of Christ's teaching, which revealed the truth to me with a clearness and persuasiveness excluding all possibility of doubt.

The discovery came about in this wise: From the time when almost in childhood, I began to read the Gospel for myself, what touched and affected me most in it, were those passages in which Christ preached of love, humility, self-abasement, self-sacrifice, and the repayment of evil by good. This has always been for me the substance of Christianity; that which my heart loved in it, in the name of which I, after despair and unbelief, accepted the idea of life adopted by a Christian and laborious people, in the name of which I submitted myself to the faith professed by that people, the faith of the Orthodox Church. But still, after submitting to the Church, I soon perceived that I could not find in her teaching a confirmation of those principles of Christianity which I believe to be the most important; I perceived that what to me was dear as the very substance of Christianity did not in fact form the substance of her teaching. I perceived that what seemed to me of most importance in the teaching of Christ was not so recognized by the Church. She recognizes another principle as the all important. At first I was not inclined to regard this difference as of vital significance. "Well, what then?" thought I. "The Church, besides

the ideas of love, humility, and self-sacrifice, accepts a dogmatic and external sense. This last is foreign to me, it is even repellent, but there is no harm in it."

But the longer I lived in obedience to the teaching of the Church, the more clear it became to me that this discrepancy was not so unimportant as I had at first thought it. The Church repelled me by the strangeness of her dogmas, by her acceptance and approval of persecutions, executions, and war; and by the disputes of conflicting creeds. But my belief in the Church was chiefly undermined by her indifference to what seemed to me the very substance of Christ's teaching; and, on the other hand, by her partiality for what I considered to be unimportant in it. I felt that something was wrong here, but what I could not tell. And this increased my difficulties, that the Church not only did not deny what seemed to me most important in Christ's teaching, but distinctly recognized it, yet in such a way that it no longer occupied the first place. I could not reproach the Church with denying what was essential, but she had so accepted it as to make it unsatisfying to me. She had not given me what I had expected from her.

I had passed from Nihilism to the Church only because I recognized the impossibility of living without belief, without the knowledge of good and evil apart from my own animal instincts. This knowledge I believed I could find in Christianity, but Christianity, as it then showed itself to me, was merely a certain tendency, excessively undeterminate, from which proceeded no clear and obligatory rules of conduct. For

these rules I turned to the Church. But the Church gave me rules which brought me no nearer to the Christianity I desired ; nay, rather tended to keep me from it. I could not, then, go with the Church. To me both dear and needful was a life based upon Christian truths ; but the Church gave me rules of conduct altogether apart from these truths. Her rules for faith with respect to dogmas, for the observance of the sacraments, for fasts and prayers, were not needed by me ; and of rules based on Christian truths there were none.

Nay, her rules even weakened, and sometimes quite destroyed, that Christian state of feeling, which alone gave a meaning to my life. And this disturbed me most, that all the ills of humanity—the condemnation of individuals, of nations, and of other creeds, and the results of such condemnation, executions, wars, and so forth,—all these things were approved by the Church. The essence of Christ's teaching—humility, forbearance, forgiveness of injuries, self-sacrifice, love,—all these were verbally exalted by the Church, and, at the same time, all that was incompatible with them was approved in practice.

Was, then, Christ's teaching of such a kind that these contradictions were bound to exist ? I could not believe it. Moreover, it had always struck me as an astonishing fact that, so far as I was acquainted with the Gospel, the passages on which definite dogmatic theories were founded were the most obscure, while those which defined the practical application of Christ's doctrine, were the clearest and the most categorical. Meanwhile the dogmas, and a Christian's obligation to them, were

defined by the Church in the clearest and most precise manner, while regarding the practical application of Christ's teaching, all was allegorical, vague, and indeterminate. Was this the way Christ wished his preaching to be interpreted?

The answer to my doubts was to be found only in the Gospels. I read and re-read them. Of the whole Gospel scheme one thing had always stood out for me in stronger relief than any other, the Sermon on the Mount. And this it was that I read oftener than anything else. In no other place does Christ speak with such solemnity; nowhere else does he enunciate so many moral, clear, and comprehensible rules, appealing so straight to the heart of every man; nowhere else does he speak to a greater or more various mass of simple folk. If there be any clear and definite rules of Christian conduct, here it is that they must be found. In these three chapters, then, of Matthew I sought the solution of my doubts.

Many and many a time did I read that Sermon, and each time with the same feeling of rapture and tender emotion as I dwelt on those verses which bid one to turn the left cheek to him who had smitten the right, to give up even our shirts to the spoiler, to be reconciled with all men, and to love our enemies; but also as I read came the old feeling of dissatisfaction. The words of God were not clear. An impossible renunciation of everything, even of life itself, as I conceived it, was ordained; and this, it seemed to me, could not be the necessary condition of salvation. Again, if this were not the necessary condition of salvation, then

there was nothing that was definite and clear. Nor did I only read the Sermon on the Mount; I read the Gospels, and the theological 'commentaries upon them.

In most of these the Sermon on the Mount is explained as indicating the perfection to which man should aspire, while he, poor fallen creature in bondage to sin, is incapable of reaching that perfection, and can be saved only by faith, prayer, and divine grace. But such explanations did not satisfy me.

They did not satisfy me because it had always seemed to me strange that Christ, well knowing the impossibility of his teaching being carried into practice by the unassisted strength of man, should have given such clear and beautiful rules directly applicable to every individual. Whenever I read them, they always seemed to apply directly to myself, and demand of me personally their fulfilment.

Each time I read them, I felt a joyful confidence that I at once, from that very moment, had it in me to do all this. I longed to do it; I strove to do it; but, whenever I found the struggle hard, then unwittingly came back to me the teaching of the Church, that man is weak and cannot of his own strength do such things, and my will was weakened.

I was told to believe and pray.

I felt, however, that I believed so little, that I could not pray. I was told to pray that God might give me faith, the faith which should create that prayer, which in turn creates the faith, which creates the prayer, and so on without end.

But reason and experience both showed me that these means were insufficient. The only true way, I felt, was to be found in my own efforts to fulfil the teaching of Christ.

And thus after long and vain seeking, after the study of all that has been written to prove the divinity of this teaching, and its non-divinity, after many doubts and much suffering, I again remained alone with my heart and the book of mystery before me. I could not give to the book the meaning which others did ; I could neither find a sense different from theirs, nor could I renounce the book. Only when I had lost all confidence in the interpretations both of learned critics and of theologians, and had thrown them all aside, in accordance with those words of Christ, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven"—only then did I at once understand what I had misunderstood before.

And all was made plain to me, not through any clever and profound transposition, comparison, or interpretation ; but by forgetting all interpretations whatever. The passage, which was to me the key that unlocked all, was contained in two verses, the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth of the fifth chapter of Matthew : \* "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not him † that is evil." I suddenly for the first time understood these words directly and simply, as though I had read them for the

\* All quotations are from the Revised Version.

† The word used is *πονηρός*, translated "him that is evil" (margin, "evil"), and in chap. vi. 13, "the evil one."



first time. I understood that Christ means what he really does say. And at once, not as if something new had appeared, but as if all that obscured the truth had fallen away, the truth itself arose before me in its full meaning, "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil." These words suddenly seemed to me to take new being, as if I had never heard them before.

Formerly, in reading this passage I had always, through some strange mental darkness, overlooked the words, " But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil," as though these words had not been there, or had no definite meaning.

Often when conversing with men who knew the Gospel well, have I noticed the same mental darkness with respect to these words. No one remembered them, and even professing Christians would often turn to the Gospel to verify their very existence.

And so I, too, used to overlook these words, and to pay attention only to what follows : " but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." And these words had always in my fancy implied an acquiescence in suffering and privation, inconsistent with human nature. The words moved me. I felt that it would be an excellent thing to put them into practice ; but I also felt that I should never have strength to act so, only for the action's sake, for the mere sake of suffering. I said to myself : " Well, so be it ; I will turn the other cheek—I shall be beaten again ; I will give—all will be taken from me. My life will not be mine.

But life has been given me, why should I lose it? Christ cannot demand that."

Thus did I speak to myself once, supposing Christ by these words to exalt suffering and privation, and in thus exalting them to speak with exaggeration, not precisely, or clearly. But now that the true significance of these words, "Resist not evil," is clear to me, I see that Christ exaggerates nothing, that he demands no suffering for suffering's sake, but only very definitely, and very clearly means what indeed he says. He says, "Resist not evil, and in so doing, know well that there may be men, who, having struck you on one cheek without meeting resistance, will strike you on the other; who, having robbed you of your shirt, will strip the coat from your back also; who, having profited by your labour, will force you to labour again; who will seize all, and return nothing. And even if it be thus, see that you still resist not evil. To those who beat and injure you, still render good for evil." And when I had understood these words in their simple meaning, all that had been dark grew light, and all that I had thought exaggerated I saw to be exact. Then for the first time I understood that the essence of the idea is to be found in the words, "resist not evil," while all that follows, but explains that commandment. I understood that Christ in no way commands me to turn the other cheek, and to give up my coat, for sheer suffering's sake; but commands me not to resist evil, and warns me that my obedience may entail suffering.

Even so a father, when he sends his son on a long journey, does not order him not to sleep by night, nor



yet to eat insufficient food, nor to get wet nor cold, when he says, "Go thy way, and if thou hast to suffer from wet and cold, do not the less continue thy way." Christ does not say, Turn your cheek to the smiter, to suffer ; but he does say, In all circumstances, resist not evil ; whatever happen, resist it not. These words, "Resist not evil," or "him that is evil," understood in their literal significance, were to me verily the master-key. I was astonished that I could have so grossly misunderstood words so clear and definite. "You are told, a tooth for a tooth ; but I say, Resist not evil, or him that is evil ; whatever evil be done unto thee have patience ; let that which is taken from thee freely go." What can be clearer, more comprehensible, more free from doubt, than this ?

Then with this understanding came also a clear comprehension of all Christ's teaching, not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but throughout the Gospels ; then all that had before seemed obscure became intelligible, all that had seemed contradictory became harmonious, and, above all, what had appeared superfluous became necessary. All the parts were fused into one whole, and without any possibility of doubt confirmed one another, as the fragments of the broken statue rightly fitted together. In this Sermon, and throughout all the Gospels, I found universal confirmation of the teaching, "resist not evil."

In this sermon, and everywhere else, Christ represents his disciples, that is to say, those who carry out his rule of not resisting evil, as men who turn the other cheek, who give up their garments, as men who are persecuted, beaten, and poor.

Here and everywhere Christ says over and over again, that he who has not taken up his cross, has not renounced all, cannot be his disciple ; no one, that is to say, who is not prepared for all the consequences of obedience to the rule, resist not evil. Christ bids his disciples be poor, and ready, without resisting evil, to undergo persecution, suffering, and death. Without resisting evil he is preparing himself for suffering and death, and drives Peter from his presence for murmuring at the command ; and himself dies reiterating it in unflinching constancy to his own teaching.

All his earlier disciples obeyed this rule, spent their lives in poverty and persecution, and never returned evil for evil.

It follows that Christ meant what indeed he said. It may be affirmed that the constant fulfilment of this rule is difficult, and that not every man will find his happiness in obeying it, it may be said that it is foolish, that, as unbelievers pretend, Christ was a visionary, an idealist, whose impracticable rules were only followed through the stupidity of his disciples. But it is impossible not to admit that Christ said very clearly and definitely that which he intended to say, namely, that men according to his teaching should not resist evil, and that therefore he who accepted his teaching could not resist it. Nevertheless, neither believers, nor unbelievers, understand these words of Christ in this clear and simple sense.

## II.

WHEN I understood that the words, "resist not evil," mean resist not evil, all my previous ideas of Christ's meaning were suddenly changed, and I was terrified, not so much at my former ignorance of his teaching as at the strange misinterpretation of it which had been mine. I knew, we all know, that the essence of Christianity is love. To say, turn the other cheek to the smiter, love your enemies, is to express the vital principle of Christianity. I had known this from childhood, but why had I not understood these simple words simply, without seeking in them an allegorical sense? Resist not evil, means resist not evil at any time; that is to say, never employ force, never do what is contrary to love. And if men still offend you, put up with the offence, employ no force against force. It would be impossible to speak more clearly and simply than he spoke. How, then, could I, believing as I believe, or at least endeavour to believe, that he who thus spoke is God—how could I have ever said that to carry this out is above my strength, is impossible? The commandment of God, which He gives us to fulfil, of which He says he who fulfils and teaches this the same shall be called great; and again that only those who do so fulfil it shall enter into life, the commandment by Himself fulfilled, by Himself expressed, with a clearness and simplicity beyond all doubt, that commandment I, without a single trial have declared to be beyond my own unaided strength, have declared

possible to be fulfilled only through supernatural assistance.

God came upon earth in order to give salvation unto man. Now, salvation is this, that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, suffered for man, redeemed his sins before the Father, and gave him a Church in which is preserved divine grace, transferable by her to those who believe.

But it means yet more than all this; God the Son gave to man both the teaching and the living example necessary for salvation. How, then, could I say, that the rules of life, expressed by him so simply and so clearly for all, were impossible of fulfilment without supernatural assistance? He not only did not say this, but he said positively, *Except ye do this, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* So far from allowing this difficulty, he said: "*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*" John the Evangelist has said that his commandments were not heavy. How, then, could I say that God's commandment so clearly defined as easy to be obeyed, that commandment which He himself as man fulfilled, which His first followers fulfilled after Him, how could I say that obedience was difficult, was even impossible without supernatural assistance? If a man gave all the powers of his mind to the abrogation of a given law, what could he say stronger than this, that it was one impossible to be carried out, that the idea of it in the mind of the law-giver himself was that it was possible to be carried out only by supernatural assistance? And this is what I thought about the commandment not to resist evil.

Then I began to recall whence and when that strange idea first came into my mind, that the law of Christ was divine but impossible of fulfilment ; and then, on reflection I saw that it had never fairly come to me in all its nakedness (for then it would have repelled me), but that I had unconsciously sucked it in with my mother's milk, and that all my subsequent life had only strengthened in me this strange error.

From childhood I had been taught that Christ is God, and his teaching divine, but at the same time I had been also taught to respect those institutions which guaranteed by force my safety against evil men, and to consider them sacred. I was taught to withstand him that is evil ; it was instilled into me that it was humiliating and shameful to submit to the evil man, and to suffer by him ; and that to resist him was worthy of praise. I was taught to judge and to condemn. I was also taught to make war, that is to say, by murder to oppose evil, and the army to which I belonged was called a Christian army, its activity was sanctified by Christian benediction.

From childhood, moreover, until manhood, I was taught to respect what was directly contrary to the law of Christ. To withstand the offender, by force to avenge insults, whether personal, family, or national ; all this was not only sanctioned, but I was taught to admire it, and to consider it in accordance with the law of Christ.

All that surrounded me ; the quiet, my personal safety, the safety of my family, my property, all were based on the law rejected by Christ, the law of a tooth for a tooth.

The teachers of the Church taught that Christ's teaching was divine, but that, through human frailty, its fulfilment was impossible without the express gift of the grace of Christ. The teachers of the world, the whole system of society, openly acknowledged the impracticability, the fancifulness of this teaching of Christ, and both by speech and act did they uphold what was contrary to it.

This confessed impracticability unconsciously took such hold of me, became such a part of my mental habit, and was in such entire accordance with my lusts, that I never once became aware of the contradiction in which I was involved. I did not see that it was impossible at one and the same time, to confess the God-Christ, the foundation of whose teaching is the non-resistance of evil, and yet both consciously and calmly to labour for the establishment of property, tribunals, kingdoms, and armies; for the establishment of a life contrary to the teaching of Christ, and yet to pray to the same Christ for the fulfilment among men of this law of non-resistance to evil and forgiveness of injuries.

Clear as it is now to me, I never in those days saw how much simpler it would be to form, and keep our life in harmony with Christ's law, and to pray meanwhile for tribunals, punishments, and wars, if such things were truly essential to our welfare.

And I understood whence arose my error. It arose from confessing Christ in word, and in deed denying him.

The law of non-resistance to evil is one which unites all this teaching into one indivisible whole; but only

when it is not a mere apothegm, only when it is a rule which it is vital for us to abide by,—only when it is Law.

It is indeed a key to open all doors, but only when it is pushed firmly into the lock. The acknowledgment of this proposition as an apothegm, impossible to be carried into practice without supernatural aid, is an abrogation of the whole teaching. What but impossible can that teaching seem to men, from which the essence has been taken! To unbelievers it even seems foolish; nay, to them it cannot well seem otherwise.

To get the engine ready, to heat the boiler, to set all in motion, but to forget to put on the connecting strap would be to do what has been done with the teaching of Christ, when we are taught that we may be Christians while discarding the rule of non-resistance to evil.

Not long ago I read the fifth chapter of Matthew with a Hebrew Rabbi. At nearly every sentence the Rabbi exclaimed, "That is in the Bible; that is in the Talmud;" and both in the Bible and the Talmud he showed me passages very similar to the words of the Sermon on the Mount. But, when we came to the verse about non-resistance to evil, he did not say, "And that is in the Talmud," but only asked me with a smile, "And do Christians fulfil that? Do they turn the other cheek?" I had nothing to reply, for well I knew that at that very time Christians not only were not turning the other cheek, but were smiting the cheeks of Hebrews turned to them. I was curious, however, to know whether any similar expression was to be found either in the Bible, or the Talmud, and I put the question to him. He answered, "No, there is not; but tell me



whether Christians fulfil that law or not." By this question he affirmed, that the existence of a rule in the Christian law, which is not only neglected by them, but acknowledged to be incapable of fulfilment, is a confession of its senselessness and uselessness. And I had no answer for him.

Now that I understand the true meaning of this doctrine, I see clearly the strange contradictions in which I was involved. Confessing Christ to be God and his teaching to be divine, and yet at the same time regulating my life by rules directly opposed to that law, what else was left me but to acknowledge that teaching to be impracticable? In word I accepted the teaching of Christ as sacred, but in deed I professed something wholly different; I acknowledged and worshipped institutions which were un-Christian, and which on every side enclosed my life.

The Old Testament speaks throughout of the misfortunes of the Jews as due to their belief in false gods instead of the one true God. Samuel, in the eighth and twelfth chapters of his first book, accuses the people of having added a new form to the many, by which they had so often forsaken God; in the place of God, who had been their King, they had set up a man-king, able, as they thought, to save them. "And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things," says Samuel to the people (chap. xii. 21), "which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain." That you may not perish with your king, serve the Lord alone.

And thus a belief in these "vain things," these empty idols, had turned me aside from the truth. Between it



and me, obscuring its light, obstructing my steps, were these "vain things," to renounce which I had not strength.

The other day I happened to walk through the Borovitsky Gate. In the gateway there sat an old and crippled beggar with his head wrapped in a rag. I took out my purse to give him alms. At that moment a smart-looking, ruddy young fellow, in a grenadier's uniform, came running down from the Kremlin. On seeing him the beggar started up in a fright, and hobbled away as fast as he could down towards the Alexander Garden. The grenadier gave chase, but, not gaining on him, stopped, and poured out abuse after him for having broken the regulations by sitting in the gateway. I waited for the grenadier, and when he came up, asked him if he had learnt to read.

"Yes, I have. What then?"

"Have you read the Gospel?"

"I have."

"Well, have you read the passage, 'And he who feeds the hungry . . . ?'" And I quoted the words.

He knew it, and listened to me. I saw that he was puzzled. Two passers-by stopped to listen. The grenadier evidently felt it rather hard that, when he had done his duty well by driving people away according to his orders, he should suddenly appear in the wrong. He was confused, and was evidently seeking for an excuse. Suddenly a light shone in his sensible black eyes; he turned away from me as if going. "And have you read the military regulations?"

I answered that I had not done so.

"Then hold your tongue!" said he, shaking his head triumphantly as, wrapping his fur coat round him, he stalked proudly to his post.

This was the only man I had ever met in my life, who with strict logic had decided the eternal question, which, in our actual social state, lay before me, and lies before every man calling himself a Christian.

### III.

IT is said, and said in vain, that the Christian teaching concerns personal salvation, and not points of general interest nor State questions. This is only a bold and unfounded assertion, the falsity of which is self-evident, and which the first serious consideration must refute.

Very well, say I to myself, I will not personally resist evil; I will turn the other cheek; but what am I to do should the troops of an enemy invade us, or a nation be oppressed, and I be called upon to take part in the strife against evil—am I to go and kill? Then I cannot avoid answering the question, Which am I to serve? God, or the "things which are vain"?—to go to the war or not to go?

I am a peasant; I am elected to office in my village as a judge, as a jurymen; I am compelled to take oaths, to try offenders, to punish them—what am I to do? Again I must choose between the law of God and the law of man.

I am a monk, living in a monastery; the peasants have carried off our hay, and I am sent to take part in

the strife against evil, to bring the peasants to justice. Again I must choose. No man can escape from the decision of this question.

I do not speak of the class to which I myself belong, its activity being almost wholly devoted to the resistance to evil, in military, judicial, or civil functions. But there is not one private individual, however modest be his position, who may not be called upon to make his decision between serving God by the fulfilment of His commandments, and serving "things which are vain" in the institution of the State. My individual life is bound up with that of the State, and the latter requires of me an un-Christian activity contrary to the commandments of Christ. At present, with universal military service, and with the legal obligation of all to be jurymen, the dilemma in its roughest, most uncompromising form, is before us all. Every one has to take the instruments of murder, the gun and the sword, and, if we have not actually to kill, he must load the gun and sharpen the sword; must, that is to say, get himself ready for murder. Every citizen must come to the courts, must take his share in the administration of justice and in punishment; in short, one and all must reject the commandments of Christ not to resist evil, and that not only by words, but in deed.

The question of the grenadier: the Gospel or the military regulations? the law of God or the law of man? stands now, as it stood in the days of Samuel, before mankind. It stood before Christ himself and his disciples. It stands now before those who wish to be Christians, and it stood before me.

The law of Christ, with its teaching of love, humility, and self-sacrifice, had always touched my heart, had always irresistibly attracted me. But on all sides—in history, in the actual facts which surrounded me, in my own life—I saw a law the very opposite, repugnant to my heart, to my conscience, to my reason, but giving full play to my animal instincts. I felt that, were I to accept the law of Christ, I should stand alone, and it might be ill with me. Before me lay persecution and weeping, as Christ himself said. Should I accept the law of man, all would approve me. I should be tranquil, secure, with all the highest mental faculties sharpened to assist me in quieting my conscience. I should laugh and rejoice, as Christ himself also said. I felt this, and consequently not only did not allow myself to dwell on the meaning of the law of Christ, but endeavoured to understand it so that it should not hinder me in my animal life. To understand it, however, in such a way was not possible, and so I did not understand it at all.

In this misunderstanding I came to a state of mental darkness which now surprises me. As an example of this darkness I will give my former comprehension of the words, “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matt. vii. 1). “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged” (Luke vi. 37).

The judicial institutions, in which I had shared, and which protected my property and my person, appeared to me undoubtedly sacred, and so clearly not destructive of the law of God, that the possibility of the above sentence meaning anything beyond a prohibition of

verbal condemnation of our neighbour never entered into my head. It never occurred to me that Christ in these words might have spoken of courts of justice, of the courts of the Zemstvo, of the criminal court, of district and justice's courts, of all senates and State departments. It was only when I understood the words, resist not evil, in their plain sense, that the question arose in my mind, How would Christ himself have behaved towards all tribunals and State departments? And, seeing that he would have had to deny them, I asked myself, Does not that mean, not only that we must not judge our neighbour verbally, but also that we must not condemn him through any court of justice; that we must not judge our neighbour in any human tribunal?

In Luke (vi. 37-49) these very words are said, immediately after those which teach us not to resist evil, but to return good for evil. Immediately after the words, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful," it is said, "And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." Does not this mean, said I to myself, that not only should we not condemn our neighbour verbally, but that tribunals for the judgment of our neighbours are not to be established? It was only necessary for me to put the question, and both my heart and common sense at once answered it in the affirmative.

I know well how startling is such an interpretation of these words at first. Certainly it startled me. To show how far I was from a right understanding, I will confess to a shameful piece of foolishness. Even after

I had become a believer, and had read the Gospel as a divine book, when I met my friends among lawyers and judges, by way of a playful joke I would say to them, "So you still keep on judging, and yet it is said, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'" I felt so certain that these words could have been uttered only against slander and the like that I did not understand the horrible sacrilege of which I myself was guilty. I had come to this, that persuaded these clear words meant something other than they do, I had in jest used them in their true significance.

I will relate in detail how all my doubts about the meaning of these words were removed ; how I came to perceive that they could mean nothing but that Christ forbade all earthly tribunals of justice, and that when he made use of them, that, and that only, must have been his meaning.

The first thing which astounded me, when I had understood the commandment of non-resistance to evil in its simple sense, was that earthly courts of justice, not only are not in accordance with it, but are directly contrary to it, contrary also to the spirit of the whole teaching, and that consequently if Christ thought of these tribunals he must have condemned them.

Christ says, Resist not evil : the object of the courts is to resist evil. Christ says, Return good for evil : the courts render evil for evil. Christ says, Do not classify men as good or bad ; the courts are occupied only in making this distinction. Christ says, Forgive all men ; forgive not once, not seven times, but without end ; love your enemies, do good to those that hate you : the courts

do not forgive, but punish ; they render not good but evil to those whom they call the enemies of society.

So that it comes to this, that Christ must have denied all courts of justice. But perhaps, thought I, Christ had no dealings with earthly tribunals, and did not think of them. But then I saw this could not be. Christ through all his life on earth was constantly hampered by the courts of Herod, by the Sanhedrin, and by the high priests. Moreover, I saw that Christ often spoke directly of judgments as evils. He warns his disciples that they will be judged, and tells them how to behave when before the judgment seat. He foretells his own condemnation, and shows in his own person how we should regard earthly tribunals. It follows, then, that Christ did think of these tribunals, which were to condemn himself and his disciples, which have condemned and are condemning millions of men. Christ saw this evil, and directly pointed to it. He directly denies the justice of the sentence against the adulteress, on the ground that man has no right to judge because he is himself guilty. He repeats this idea several times, saying that the eye with a beam in it should not behold the mote in the eye of another, that the blind should not lead the blind, lest both fall into the ditch.

Yet may it not be that in his reproof of the sentence on the adulteress, and in his application of the parable of the beam and the mote to the general weakness of mankind, he still did not forbid our appeal to earthly justice for defence against evil men. But I see that this can in no way be admitted.

In the Sermon on the Mount, addressing himself



to all, he says: "And if any would go to law with thee, to take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Therefore he forbids every one to go to law.

But it may be that Christ spoke only of the personal relation of the individual to the courts of law, not denying the administration of justice itself, and admitting into a Christian society those who sit as judges in established tribunals. But I see that this also can in no way be admitted. Christ in his prayer enjoins on all men without exception to forgive others that they might have their own trespasses forgiven; and this idea he repeats many times. It follows, then, that every man before bringing his offering of prayer is bound to pardon all trespassers. How can a man, who by his profession of faith is bound to pardon all who have done wrong, judge and sentence by law? To me, therefore, it is clear that by the teaching of Christ, a Christian cannot be a punishing judge.

But it may be, from the connection which the words judge not and condemn not have with others, that in this passage Christ, when he said judge not, did not think of earthly courts. This, however, is also not so; on the contrary, it is clear by the context and the discourse itself that in saying judge not, Christ did not mean to speak of courts and tribunals. According to Matthew and Luke, before saying judge not, and condemn not, he said, Resist not evil, bear with evil, do good to all men. Before these words, according to Matthew, he repeated the saying of the Hebrew law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." And after this reference to the criminal law, he said, "But



do not ye so, resist not evil ;” and again after that he says, “Judge not.” It surely follows that Christ did speak of the earthly criminal law, and did condemn it in the words, “judge not.”

Again, according to Luke, he said not only, Do not judge, but do not judge, and do not condemn. These words, having almost the same meaning, must have been added for a special purpose ; they could have had only one object, to explain the significance of those which went before.

If he had wished to say do not condemn your neighbour, he would have added that word ; but he says only, Do not condemn. And he adds, “and ye shall not be condemned : release, and ye shall be released.”

But after all, Christ in these words may not have alluded to courts of law ; and I may be maintaining my own false interpretation of this passage.

I inquire, then, how did the earlier disciples of Christ, the apostles, look upon the courts of this world ? Did they accept them ? Did they approve of them ?

In chap. iv., and in the eleventh and twelfth verses, the apostle James says : “Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law : but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the law-giver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy : but who art thou that judgest thy neighbour ?”

The word which is here translated by “speaking against,” and in Russian by “to slander, or speak evil

of," is *καταλάλω*. Now a simple reference to the lexicon shows us that the real meaning of the word is to "accuse." The translation is, "He that speaketh against" (speaketh evil of) "his brother, speaketh against" (slandereth) "the law," and one involuntarily asks, why? Whatever evil I may speak of my brother, I do not necessarily speak evil of the law, but if I accuse and bring my brother before the judgment-seat, it is evident that then I condemn the law of Christ; I account the law of Christ insufficient, and in so doing I accuse and judge the law. Clearly, then, I do not fulfil Christ's law, I am myself a judge. The judge, says James, is he who is able to save. How, then, can I, who am unable to save, be a judge, or take it upon me to punish?

The whole passage is directed against human judgments in courts of law, and repudiates them.

The whole of this epistle breathes the same spirit. In it (ii. 1-13) we read, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou here, or sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts? Harken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? But ye have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you,

and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable name by the which ye are called? Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." These last words, "mercy glorieth against judgment," have often been translated, "mercy must be upheld in judgment"—a rendering which implies that judgment by Christians is lawful, but that it must be a judgment of mercy.

James admonishes the brethren to make no distinction of persons. If you have regard to persons, then you are divided in your mind like the judges of the tribunals with evil thoughts. You have decided that the poor man is the worse; on the contrary, it is the rich man. He both oppresses you, and drags you before the judgment-seat. If you live by the law of love to your neighbour, by the law of mercy (which, by way of distinction, James calls the royal law), then it is well. But if you have regard to persons, and make distinction among men, then you become transgressors against the law of mercy. Farther, having probably in view the

example of the adulteress, whom they brought to Christ in order to stone her to death according to the law, or else in general allusion to the crime of adultery, James says, that he who punishes an adulteress by death is guilty of murder, and breaks the eternal law; for the same eternal law forbids adultery and murder. He says, *Act as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.* For there is no mercy for him that doth not show mercy, and *consequently mercy destroys judgment.*

Can words be more clear, more definite? Here are forbidden, all respect of persons, every judgment on individuals as good or bad. Here is a direct reference to earthly tribunals, which are undoubtedly bad. It even appears that the judgments of such tribunals are accounted criminal, because they inflict punishment for crime, and that the justice of human laws is at once annihilated by God's law—the law of mercy.

I read the Apostle Paul, he who suffered before many tribunals, and I find in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that he admonishes them of their vices and errors; and among the rest names their administration of justice, ver. 32, "Who, knowing the ordinance of God that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them."

Chap. ii. 1-4. "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. And reckonest thou

this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The Apostle Paul says: that they, knowing the rightful judgment of God, act unjustly, and teach others to do the same, and therefore the man who judges cannot be justified.

This, then, is the opinion of the apostles, as expressed in their epistles on tribunals; and in actual life, as we all know, they had to submit to these tribunals as to an evil, and a trial to be borne with fortitude and in obedience to the will of God.

Any one who attempts to realize to himself the position of the early Christians among the Pagans, will easily understand how impossible it was for them to forbid the tribunals which persecuted them. They could only as occasion offered, oppose this evil by denying the principle on which it rested, and that they did.

From the writings of the earliest teachers of the Church I learn that they invariably distinguished their teaching from all others by never admitting either compulsion or judgment.

Both Athenagoras and Origen, for example, emphasize the fact that they, while themselves enduring patiently the cruelties of man's justice, never in their turn sought to put in motion the engines of the law. The martyrs by their acts professed the same doctrine. Throughout all Christendom up to the time of Constantine these tribunals were regarded in no other light than an evil to

be patiently borne. No Christian of that age would have thought it compatible with his Christianity to take a part in the administration of the law.

All my studies have shown me that the words of Christ, judge not, and condemn not, were understood by his first disciples as I now understand them, in their simple meaning,—take no part whatever in the administration of the law.

Beyond all possibility of doubt was I thus confirmed in my conviction that the words, judge not, and condemn not, were to be taken in their most practical sense. But the interpretation, as of speaking evil against our neighbour, had been so generally accepted, and courts of law had so boldly and self-confidently flourished in all Christian states, and under the shelter of the Church itself, that I long doubted of the justice of my own interpretation. There must be some ground for the general interpretation, I thought, for the establishment by Christians of courts of justice ; there must be something which I do not understand. There must exist grounds, on which these words are understood to mean, evil-speaking, grounds on which Christian courts of justice are established.

Then I turned to see how the Church interpreted these words, and I found that from the fifth century downwards, the Church had taken them as referring to the verbal condemnation of our neighbour—to slander.

Now, when these words are taken only in that sense, there arises this difficulty : how is it possible not to condemn ? It is impossible not to condemn evil, and the question therefore rests on this, what may and what may

not be condemned. It has been said, by St. Augustine and Theophilus, that this cannot apply to the servants of the Church, inasmuch as the apostles themselves judged. It has also been said, that the allusion was probably to the Jews, who accused their neighbour of small offences, and themselves committed greater.

But no word is said whether civic tribunals were forbidden or allowed by Christ.

The absence of all answers to this natural question suggests that it must have been held self evident, that as soon as a Christian is in the seat of judgment, he has then the right not only to judge, but even to condemn to death.

I turned to the Greek, Catholic, and Protestant writers, to those of the school of Tübingen and of the historical school; by all, even by the freest thinkers among them, the words in question were understood as a prohibition of slander. But why, contrary to the whole teaching of Christ, are these words understood in such a narrow sense that the prohibition of slander does not include the prohibition of courts of justice? Why should it be supposed that Christ, while forbidding as an evil thing the condemnation of our neighbour by words involuntarily breaking from the lips, does not regard as evil, and does not forbid the very same condemnation, when accomplished deliberately, and accompanied by the use of force against the one condemned? To this there is no answer; there is not the slightest hint that the word condemnation may include the sentences of those tribunals from which millions suffer. Nay, owing to these very words, judge not, and condemn not,



theologians have found it necessary carefully to explain the cruel processes of legal trials, reminding us, that in Christian kingdoms the administration of justice must exist coequally with the law of Christ.

When I had satisfied myself of this, I began to doubt the sincerity of these interpretations, and turned to what I ought to have begun with, the translation of the words judge not, and condemn not.

In the original text the words are κρίνω and καταδικάζω. The incorrect translation of the word καταλαλέω in the Epistle of James, by "evil speaking," confirmed my doubts of the correctness of the translation. On comparing the different translations of the words κρίνω and καταδικάζω, I found that the Vulgate renders the word condemn by "condammare"; it is the same in French; in Slavonic it is "to condemn"; while Luther translates it "verdammen—to curse."

The difference between these translations increased my doubts, and I asked myself, what can be the meaning of the Greek word κρίνω which is used in both Gospels and of the word καταδικάζω, which is used in that of Luke, who wrote, according to the opinion of scholars, a good Greek style. How would it be translated by a man, who knew nothing of the Gospel-teaching nor of its interpretations, and had only before him this one sentence?

On consulting a lexicon, I found that this word κρίνω has many different meanings. It often means—to pass sentence on, or even to condemn to death; but never to speak evil of. In the glossary to the New Testament I found that the word is there often used to signify the sentence of a tribunal, sometimes to express the idea of



distinguishing, but never that of speaking evil. Thus I saw that the word *κρίνω* may be translated in many different ways, but that by which it is made to mean evil speaking, or slander, is the most fanciful and unauthorized of all.

I then examined the word *καταδικάζω*, which follows the word *κρίνω*, as it is evident that the former word was added in order to qualify the meaning in which the latter was used. I opened an ordinary lexicon and found that the word *καταδικάζω* never has any other meaning than to sentence as a judge to punishment, or to death. I then again referred to the concordance and found that this word is used four times in the New Testament and always in the sense of "to condemn by law—to execute." I examined the context, and found that this word is used by James (v. 6), where he says, "Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one." Here the word condemned is this same word *καταδικάζω*, and it is used in allusion to the condemnation of Christ. This word is never used in any other sense throughout the whole of the New Testament, nor in any Greek writings.

What is this, then? Have I lost my senses? I, and every one living in our present society, were we only to reflect on the lot which befalls so many, would be horrified by the sufferings and wrongs which human criminal laws bring into human life, an evil alike for the judge and the judged, from the punishments of a Zingis Khan, or of a French revolution, to those of our own days.

No man with a heart in him can have escaped this

sense of horror and of doubt in the existence of good, when he has heard these things related ; or, worse still, when he has been a witness of the execution of man by man, or when he has even looked upon the instruments of death, the guillotine and the gallows.

In the Gospel, whose every word we receive as sacred, it is directly and clearly said, You have a criminal law, a tooth for a tooth, but I give you a new law, Resist not evil ; let all men fulfil this commandment ; return not evil for evil, but do good to all men at all times, and forgive all men.

No less clearly is it said, Judge not. And as if to make any misunderstanding of the words impossible, it is added, Do not sentence to punishment by the law.

My heart says to me distinctly and intelligibly, Do not punish. Science says, Do not punish ; the more punishment, the greater evil. Reason says, Do not punish ; evil cannot be extirpated by evil. The word of God, in which I believe, tells me the same. And I, after studying the teaching in its entirety, after reading the words, "judge not, and ye shall not be judged ; and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned ; release, and ye shall be released," confess them to be the words of God, and then explain them to mean that we should not occupy ourselves with tittle-tattle and slander, and continue to class courts of justice among Christian institutions, and myself, a judge among Christian people !

And I was terrified by the coarseness of the deceit which had enveloped me.

## IV.

I UNDERSTOOD at last what Christ meant when he said, "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ; but I say unto you, Resist not evil." Christ says, It has been instilled into you, you have become accustomed to account it a good and reasonable thing that you should withstand evil by force, and pluck out an eye for an eye, that you should establish courts of law, police officers, and soldiers, and that you should fight against your enemies ; but I say unto you, Do no violence, take no part in violence, do evil to no one, not even to those whom you call your enemies.

I understood that in laying down the proposition not to resist evil, Christ not only points out the immediate result to every man of not resisting evil, but that in opposition to the principles which prevailed from the time of Moses to his own, which were accepted by the Roman Law, and which exist still in the codes of different nations, he also lays down the rule of non-resistance to evil, which, according to his teaching, should be the binding principle of our social life, to free humanity from the evils wrought by itself. He says to mankind, You think that your laws correct evil, they only increase it. There is one only way of extirpating evil—to render for it good to all men without distinction. You have tried your principle for thousands of years ; try now the reverse, which is mine.

An astonishing thing ! It has often happened to me of late to speak with men of all conditions about this law

of Christ's, non-resistance to evil. I have met, though seldom, with some who agreed with me, but there are two sorts who never admit, not even in principle, the straightforward interpretation of that law, and warmly oppose its justice. These persons are at the two opposite poles of humanity: Christian conservative patriots, who accept their Church as the true one, and revolutionary atheists. Neither will consent to abandon the right of opposing by force what they consider to be evil. The wisest, the most learned among them, close their eyes to this simple and obvious truth, that if one man be suffered to oppose by violence what he considers evil, then another must be equally allowed to use violence against what to him is evil.

Not long ago I was allowed a sight of an instructive correspondence on this very subject between an orthodox Slavophile and a Christian revolutionist. The one stood out for war in the name of his oppressed Slavonic brethren, the other for revolution in the name of his oppressed brethren, the Russian peasants. Both appealed to force, and both relied on the teaching of Christ.

The teaching of Christ is understood in many different ways, but never in the one simple sense which can alone be obtained from his words.

We have arranged our whole life on the very principles which he denies; we will not understand his teaching in its simple and direct meaning, and we assure ourselves and others, either that we do profess his teaching, or that it is unsuited to us. So-called Christians believe that Christ is God, the Second Person of the Trinity, who came down upon earth to show men how

to live, and they put in practice the most complicated details, for the celebration of the sacraments, for the building of churches, for the sending forth of missionaries, the ordination of pastors, the government of their flocks, and the correction of errors of faith ; but one trifling circumstance they forget—to do what he taught. Unbelievers also in all ways essay to regulate their lives, but not according to the law of Christ, having agreed to hold that law unsuitable. No one will consent to attempt to do what he commanded. Nay, without even attempting it, both believers and unbelievers alike have decided that it is impossible.

He says with perfect clearness and simplicity : the law of resistance to evil by violence, which you have made the principle of your lives, is false and unnatural : he gives another basis—the non-resistance of evil, which according to his teaching can alone deliver mankind from evil. He says : you think that your laws of violence correct evil ; they only increase it. For thousands of years you have tried to destroy evil by evil, and you have not destroyed it but increased it. Do what I say, and you will know the truth of this.

He not only preached this, but himself throughout his life and in his death practised as he preached.

Believers listen to all this, read it in their churches, call these words divine, call him God, but at the same time say, All this is well, but it is impossible with our social state, it would derange our whole way of life, to which we are accustomed, which we love. Consequently we believe this only in the sense of an ideal, to be reached by prayer and faith in the Holy Communion, in the

redemption, and the resurrection from the dead. Others, unbelievers, the free interpreters of the teaching of Christ, the historians of religion, Strauss, for example, Renan, and others, adopting completely the interpretation of the Church, that the teaching of Christ has no direct application to life, but is a visionary doctrine consoling to weak-minded men, tell us seriously that though fit to be preached to the wild inhabitants of the by-places of Galilee, for us, with our culture, it presents only, in the words of Renan, the amiable dream "*du charmant docteur.*"

According to their opinion Christ was unable to rise to the wisdom of our present civilization and culture. Had he reached the intellectual height which these learned men have attained, he would not have spoken all that amiable nonsense about the birds of heaven, the turning of the other cheek to the smiter, and the taking thought only for the day. These wise historians judge of Christianity by what they see of it in our present society.

The Christianity of our society and our time accepts our present mode of life with all its arrangements as true and sacred. Solitary confinement, imprisonment, music-halls, factories, newspapers, brothels, and parliaments; and of the teaching of Christ only that is adopted which is not destructive of such a life. And as Christ totally rejects such a life, from his teaching nothing is taken but empty words. The learned historians see this fact, and having no need to conceal it, as do the pretended believers, they take this same teaching of Christ, bereft of its very essence, and subject it to a pro-

found criticism, and with good reason reject it, and show that Christianity never was anything more than a visionary idea.

Before we judge the teaching of Christ, it is surely necessary to know in what it consists ; before deciding whether his teaching be reasonable or not, to take what he said as he said it. This is precisely what we do not do, whether freethinkers or interpreters after the Church, and why we do not, we know very well.

We know very well that the teaching of Christ rejected, and still rejects all those human errors, those "vain things" and hollow idols, which we, calling them churches, kingdoms, culture, science, art, civilization, think to exclude from his list of errors. But Christ is against them all ; his words exclude every "vain thing."

Not Christ alone, but all the Hebrew prophets, like John the Baptist, all the truly wise men of the earth, speak of this same church, of these same kingdoms, of this culture, this civilization, as of an evil ruinous to man.

Let us suppose a builder to say to the master of a house, "Your house is bad, it requires to be altogether rebuilt," and then to go on to details, to explain how such and such beams are wanted, how they should be fashioned, where they should be put. The master pays no heed to the general proposition that his house is bad and should be rebuilt, but with feigned respect he listens to the builder's ideas for the ultimate arrangement of the house. It is clear that the advice of the builder will appear unsuitable, and that he who thus refuses it his respect will end by calling it foolish. This is exactly how we are treating the teaching of Christ.



For want of another illustration, I have employed this. I then remembered that Christ in his preaching has himself employed it. He said, "I will destroy your temple, and in three days I will build another." For this he was crucified, and for this do they now crucify his teaching.

The least to be required of those who judge a particular set of doctrines, is that they should accept them in the sense in which they were understood by the teacher. But he understood his teaching, not as a far-fetched ideal of humanity, the fulfilment of which was impossible, not as a visionary poetical fancy, with which to captivate the simple-minded folk of Galilee. To him, his teaching meant life, actual work which should save the race of man. It was no dreamer who hung on the cross, to suffer, to die for his teaching. In the same way many others have died and still will die. It cannot be said of such teaching that it is a dream of the fancy.

All teaching of the truth is fancy to those who stray from it. We have come to this, that many (and I myself was of their number) say, that this teaching is visionary because it is unsuited to man's nature. It is against man's nature, they say, when he is beaten on one cheek to turn the other, unnatural to give up what is our own to another, unnatural to work not for ourselves but for others. It belongs to a man, they say, to take care of himself, of his own safety and of that of his family, to defend his property; in other words, it is natural for a man to fight for his existence. A learned jurist scientifically proves that the most sacred duty of man is to defend his rights, that is to say, to fight.



The moment, however, we dismiss the thought, that the existing conditions of society as made by men are the best and most sacred of which human life is capable, the objection—that Christ's teaching is opposed to man's nature—immediately turns an argument against the objectors. Who will dispute that to torture a dog, to kill a hen or a calf, much more to torture and kill a man, is contrary and painful to man's nature? I have known men abstain from meat because they had themselves to kill the animals. Meanwhile human society is so constituted, that not a single personal good is obtained without the sufferings of others, and these sufferings are repugnant to our human nature.

The whole system of our social life, the complicated mechanism of our varied institutions, which all have violence for their aim, bear witness to the degree to which violence is contrary to human nature. Not a single judge will consent to strangle with a rope the man whom he has condemned to death in his court. No one of higher rank will consent to snatch a peasant from his weeping family and shut him up in prison. No general, nor soldier, save in obedience to discipline, to his oath, and in time of war, would kill hundreds of Turks or Germans and destroy their villages; he would not so much as wound one of them.

These things are due to that complicated machinery of Society, and the State, which makes it its first business to destroy the feeling of responsibility for such deeds, that no man should feel them to be as unnatural as they are. Some make laws, others apply them. Others again train men and educate them in the habit

of discipline, in the habit, that is to say, of senseless and irresponsible obedience. Again others, and these are the best trained of all, practise every kind of violence, even to the slaying of men without the slightest knowledge of the why and wherefore. We need only clear our minds for an instant from the network of human institutions in which we are thus entangled, to feel how adverse it is to our true nature.

When we cease to affirm that this accustomed evil, the fruits of which we enjoy, is an immutable and divine truth, it becomes clear which of the two is the more natural and suitable to man—the law of violence or the law of Christ. Am I to think that the peace and safety of myself and my family, my joys and my happiness, are to be bought by beggary, by moral corruption, and by the suffering of millions of men ; by the daily erection of the gallows, by hundreds and thousands of prisoners ; by millions of soldiers torn from their families and made sottish by discipline, and by as many officers of police, who watch over my amusements with loaded arms turned against hungry men ? Am I to buy each sweet morsel that I put into my mouth, or into the mouths of my children, with all this mass of human suffering, because without it no morsel is attainable ? Or am I rather to think, that no morsel is mine which is necessary to any one else, for which another suffers ? I have only once to understand that these things are so, that each joy of mine, each instant of tranquillity in our present social state, is bought by the privations and suffering of thousands who are the victims of violence ; I have only to understand this, to be convinced of what is really

fitted to the nature of man, to man not only as an animal, but as a reasoning being,—I have only to accept the law of Christ in its true significance and with all its consequences, to understand that not only is Christ's teaching not contrary to human nature, but that on the contrary it consists in rejecting a teaching opposed to human nature, that is, the fanciful doctrine of men about resistance to evil, which really is the cause of all their suffering.

Christ's teaching, Resist not evil, a fanciful dream !

But is not this a dreadful dream, what the life of men, men in whose souls has been placed the sense of pity and love, has undergone and is even now undergoing from the stake, wheels, the lash, mutilation, torture, chains, penal labour, the gallows, military executions, solitary confinement, prisons ; what women and children endure through war, through periodical revolutions ; what some have to suffer in carrying out all these horrors, and others in the attempt to avoid them.

When we feel the teaching of Christ, we see that this world of ours, not the world given by God for man to be happy in, but a world created by men for their own ruin, is a dream, the wildest and most terrible of dreams, the wandering of a madman's mind, from which we need but once to awaken never again to return to its fearful visions.

God descended upon earth, the Son of God, one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, became man, and redeemed the sin of Adam. This God, we have been taught to think, was obliged to say something mystic and mysterious, incomprehensible, to be understood only

with the aid of faith and divine grace ; and yet how simple, clear, and reasonable are those words of God ! Render not evil to one another, and evil will exist no more. Is the revelation of God then indeed so simple ? Has He, indeed, said no more than this ? So much surely we all knew.

The prophet Elijah hid himself from the wrath of men in a cave, and it was revealed to him that there he should see God. A storm arose, and the trees were broken by the wind. Elijah thought that this was God, and looked, but God was not there. A tempest followed of thunder and lightning, and Elijah came forth to see, but God was not there. Next there was an earthquake : fire came out from the earth, the rocks trembled and the hills were shaken. Elijah looked again, but God was not there. Last came a calm, and a light wind blew from the quiet fields. Elijah looked, and God was there. So come to us the simple words of God, Resist not evil.

Simple they are, yet in them lies the law of God and of man, the single and eternal law. So true is it, that whatsoever progress towards the lessening of evil there has been in the history of mankind is due to those and those only who have understood the teaching of Christ, and have suffered evil without opposing it by violence. The progress of humanity towards good is accomplished not by its tormentors, but by its martyrs. As fire will not put out fire, so evil will not destroy evil. Good alone, untainted by evil, can overcome it. That this is so, is a law of the human soul, as immutable as the law of Galileo, nay, yet more immutable, more clear and complete. Men may fall away from it, may hide it from

others, but the progress towards the good of humanity can be accomplished through it alone. Each forward step is taken only in the name of non-resistance to evil.

The disciple of Christ can say in answer to all temptations and threats even with a greater certainty than Galileo, “‘It remains true for all that,’ not with violence, but with returning good for evil shalt thou destroy evil.”

If this advance be gradual, it is because the clearness, simplicity, and reasonableness, the necessity and inevitableness of the teaching of Christ, are hidden from the greater part of mankind under the veil of cunning; most dangerously hidden under a pretended teaching which is falsely attributed to him.

## V.

EVERYTHING confirmed me in the truth of this new interpretation of the teaching of Christ. It was long, however, before I could accustom myself to the strange idea, that after Christ's law had been preached during eighteen hundred years by so many men, after so many had devoted their lives to the study of this law, it had still to be discovered, as though it had been a new one. But however strange, so it was. The teaching of Christ not to resist evil arose before me as something completely new, something of which till that moment I had been supremely ignorant. I asked myself, whence came this? I must have had some false perception of the meaning

of Christ's teaching, to have so strangely misunderstood it. A false perception indeed it was !

On turning again to the Gospel, I was not in the position of a man, who having never heard of the teaching of Christ, hears it suddenly for the first time, but I had a whole system ready by which I was to judge it. Christ was no longer to me a prophet unfolding a new and divine law, but one who completed and explained to me what I had long accepted as the certain law of God. I possessed already a complete, distinct, though complicated teaching, with respect to God, the creation of the world and of man, and the commandments of God, in the books of Moses.

In the Gospel I found the words : "Ye have found that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ; but I say unto you, Resist not evil." The words "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" were the commandment given by God to Moses. The words "resist not evil," embodied the new commandment which repealed the original one.

Had I simply considered the teaching of Christ, apart from those theological theories which I had, as it were, sucked in with my mother's milk, I should have understood simply, the simple meaning of his words ; I should have understood that he rejects the old law and proclaims the new, which is his own. But it had been instilled into me, that Christ does not reject the law of Moses, but on the contrary confirms it to the smallest point and completes it.

The verses of Matthew (v. 17-23), in which this is declared, had always struck me as obscure and per-

plexing. With the knowledge I then had of the Old Testament, and especially of the later books of Moses, so full of trifling, senseless, and often cruel rules, and each beginning with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," it seemed to me a strange thing and incomprehensible, that Christ could confirm the law of Moses. I left that question, however, without deciding it. I went back to the belief, instilled into me from childhood, that both these laws were the work of the Holy Ghost; that they agree one with the other, and that Christ in truth confirms the law of Moses, and completes it.

How and where he completed it, how to reconcile the obvious contradictions between the words of the Gospel, these verses (17-20), and the words, "But I say unto you," I had never clearly understood. No sooner, however, had I accepted the plain meaning of Christ's teaching than I saw that these two laws were contradictory, that there could be no question of their agreement, or of the completion of one by the other; that it is necessary to accept one of them; and that the interpretation of those verses of Matthew, which had formerly struck me as obscure, was in truth a false one.

When I again read the verses 17-19, their meaning was as clear to me as formerly it had been dark.

Their meaning was clear, not because I had thought of something new, or that anything had been changed, but only because I had thrown aside an artificial interpretation which had become incorporated with the passage.

Christ says (Matt. v. 17-19), "Think not that I



came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished."

And he adds, ver. 20, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

He says, I have not come to destroy the eternal law, for the fulfilment of which were written your holy books and your prophecies, but I have come to enjoin on you the execution of the eternal law, and I speak, not of that law which your teachers the Pharisees call the law of God, but of that eternal law which is more immutable even than the earth and the heavens.

I express the same meaning in other words, only in order to divert the mind of the reader from the customary false interpretation. Had this false interpretation not existed, it would be impossible to express the idea better and more distinctly than in these verses.

The interpretation that Christ does not reject the law is based on this, that the word law in this passage, thanks to a comparison with the "one jot or one tittle" of the written law, is unjustifiably, and contrary to the sense of the words, taken to imply the written law instead of the eternal law. But Christ does not speak of the written law. If Christ had so spoken in this passage, he would have employed the customary expression, the law and the prophets, as is his invariable custom when using the word in that significance; but



his expression is quite different, "the law *or* the prophets." If Christ had here meant the written law, in the following verse, which is a continuation of the thought, he would have said, "the law *and* the prophets," and not used the word law alone as it there stands in the text.

Again, Christ uses the same expression in the Gospel of Luke, in such a context that its meaning becomes indisputable. In chap. xvi. 15, he says to the Pharisees, who rely on justification through the written law, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men ; but God knoweth your hearts : for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. *The law and the prophets* were until John : from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." Immediately afterwards (ver. 17) he says, "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall." By the words, "*The law and the prophets* until John," Christ repeals the written law. By the words, "easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle *of the law* to fall," he declares the eternal law. In the former place he says, *the law and the prophets* ; that is to say, *the written law* ; in the latter place he uses the single word *law*, and he means *the eternal law*. It follows clearly, then, that here the *eternal law* is placed in distinct opposition to the *written law*,\* and that the same opposition is intended in

\* This is far from being the only argument for this interpretation. As if purposely not to leave in doubt which law is meant, Christ immediately afterwards and in direct continuity dwells on a striking instance of the rejection of the law of Moses by that eternal law not one title of which

Matthew, when the *eternal law* is indicated by the words, *the law* OR *the prophets*.

The history of the variations in the text of these seventeenth and eighteenth verses is a remarkable one. In the greater number of the manuscripts the word "law" alone is used without the addition of the word "prophets." It is impossible to take such a rendering as significant of "the written law." In other copies, in Tischendorf's and in the Canonical one, the word "prophets" is added, not with the conjunction "and," but with the conjunction "or"; the law *or* the prophets. This also expressly excludes the rendering, "the written law," and gives the sense of the eternal law.

In some copies unaccepted by the Church, the word "prophets" is added with the conjunction "and"; and on the repetition of the words, "and the prophets" is added again. In this way the sense of the whole passage is changed, and Christ is made to speak only of the written law.

These variations furnish us with the history of the interpretation of this passage. The one clear meaning is, that Christ here, as also in Luke, speaks of the eternal law; but among the copyists of the Gospels were some who desired to acknowledge the law of Moses as binding, and so wilfully altered the meaning by the addition of the word "prophets."

Other Christians, who do not accept the books of Moses, either exclude the addition, or change the con-

shall pass away, the most violent contradiction of the former to be found in the Gospels (Luke xvi. 18): "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery:"—that is to say, by the written law divorce is allowed, but by the eternal law it is a sin.

junction "and" into "or" (*καί* into *ἢ*), and the Canon in this passage uses "or." Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the text as thus accepted by the Canon, and its freedom from all doubt, Canonical interpreters continue to explain it in the spirit in which these unaccepted changes were made. This passage has been subjected to countless constructions, each farther from the true meaning, as each interpreter has been less guided by the plain and simple meaning of the teaching of Christ, and the greater number of these interpreters have adopted the apocryphal sense refuted by the text.

In order to be persuaded that Christ in these verses speaks only of the eternal law, we need but analyze the word which has given occasion to the false interpretation.

In Russian, "*zakon*"; in Greek, "*νομός*"; in Hebrew, "*tora*"; in all three languages, the word "law" has two principal meanings: the one is the law itself, without any relation to the form of its expression; the other is the written expression of what is accounted law. These two different meanings exist in all languages.

In Greek, in the Epistles of Paul, this difference is even determined sometimes by the use of the article. Without the article Paul generally employs the word in the sense of the written law; with the article in the sense of the eternal law of God.

Among the ancient Hebrews, by the prophets, and by Isaiah, the word law ("*tora*") is always used in the sense of the revelation of the one eternal teaching of God apart from any formal expression. Again, the same word in Ezra, for the first time and in the latest

stage, in that of the Talmud, began to be employed in the sense of the five books written by Moses. To the latter was then given the general title of "tora," the law, as with us the word Bible is used, with this difference, however, that we have words to distinguish what we mean by the Bible and by the law of God, whereas the Hebrews had only one and the same for both.

We now see why Christ sometimes, like Isaiah and the other prophets, employs the word law ("tora") in the sense of the law of God, which is the true one, and sometimes rejects it in the sense of the written law of the five books. But, to mark the difference, when he, rejecting it, employs the word in the sense of the written law, he always adds "and the prophets," or else puts before the word "law" the word "your."

When he says, Do not do to another what you would not have him do to you, for this is the law and the prophets, he speaks of the written law, he says that it may all be reduced to that one expression of the eternal law, and in these words he repeats the written law.

When he says (Luke xvi. 16), "The law and the prophets were until John." He speaks of the written law, and denies its obligations on man.

When he says (John vii. 19), "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" or (John viii. 17) "in your law it is written," or (John xv. 25) "that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law," he speaks of the written law, of the law which he rejects, of that same law which condemned him to death (John xix. 7). The Jews answered Pilate, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die."

It is evident that the law of the Jews which condemned to death is not the law which he taught. When Christ says, I came not to destroy the law, but to teach you to fulfil it, for nothing can change in it, and it must all be fulfilled, he speaks, not of the written law, but of the divine eternal law, and, so speaking, confirms it.

But let us suppose that all these are formal proofs, that I have laboriously put together the various texts, contexts, and variations, that I have concealed all that makes against my own interpretation ; let us suppose that the interpretation of the Church is altogether clear and convincing, and that Christ really did not abrogate the law of Moses, but left it in its former authority. Let us suppose it was so ; but, then, what is it that Christ did teach ?

According to the interpretation of the Church, Christ taught that he was the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God the Father, who came upon earth to redeem by his death the sin of Adam. But every one who reads the Gospel knows that Christ is either silent on this point, or, at all events, that his meaning is doubtful. Suppose, however, that we are mistaken, and that these assertions are made. Even in that case Christ's allusions to his being the second person of the Trinity and the redeemer of the sins of man, occupy the smallest and the most obscure part of the Gospel. Of what does all the remaining part of the teaching of Christ consist ? It cannot be denied, and all Christians have at all times admitted, that Christ's teaching mainly consists in rules for human conduct, in the relationship of man to his fellow-men.

If we admit that Christ taught a new way of life, we must define for ourselves the kind of men among whom he taught.

Let us take Russians or Englishmen, Chinese or Hindus, or even savages, and we shall see that every nation has its own rules of life, its own laws to live by, and that in consequence, if a teacher preaches to any one of them a new law of life, he must necessarily abrogate the old, for, if he did not, he would be no teacher. It would be the same in England, in China, the same with us. The teacher would necessarily abrogate those laws of ours, which we esteem so highly and think almost sacred.

But with us it might happen, though I grant a difficulty in the supposition, that the teacher of this new law of life would abrogate only our civil and criminal laws, our customs, and would leave untouched the laws which we hold to be divine. But in the midst of the Hebrew nation, who had only one law, a law which was divine and embraced the whole conduct of life down to its slightest details, in the midst of such a people what could the preacher teach, after he had declared that the whole law of the nation was to remain and not pass away?

Let us suppose that this again is no proof. Let those, who interpret the words of Christ to mean that he confirms the whole law of Moses, consider this: whom through the whole course of his career did Christ convict? against whom did he raise his voice, calling them Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes?

Who were they that rejected the teaching of Christ,

and crucified him through their high priests? If Christ accepted the law of Moses, where were the faithful followers of that law, who must have been on his side? Was there really not one of them?

The Pharisees, we are told, were a sect. The Jews do not say so; they say that the Pharisees were the faithful followers of the law. But allowing them to have been a sect, so also were the Sadducees. Where, then, were those who kept aloof from sects, where were the orthodox Jews?

According to the Gospel of John all enemies of Christ are called Jews, and, as Jews, do they reject his teaching and oppose him. But in the Gospels it is not the Pharisees and the Sadducees alone who appear as the enemies of Christ; enemies no less were the lawyers, those who observed the law, the elders, those who were always considered the representatives of national wisdom.

Christ says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (to a changed life, *μετάνοια*). Where, then, were the righteous to be found? Who were they? Was it Nicodemus alone? Nicodemus is represented as an honest but erring man.

We are so accustomed to this strange explanation, that the Pharisees and certain wicked Jews crucified Christ, that it never enters into our heads to put the simple question, where were those who were not Pharisees and wicked, but were simply Jews and upholders of the law? A moment's thought over this question, and all becomes clear. Christ, whether God or man, taught on earth in the midst of a people who obeyed a law regula-



ting the life of man and called the law of God. How would Christ behave with respect to this law?

Every prophet, every teacher of a faith who unfolds to men the law of God, must always meet with something which men believe to be that law. He will never be able to escape from the double sense of the word law, the one their own law which these men falsely consider to be the law of God, the other that which is really His eternal law. And not only will the teacher be unable to escape this twofold significance, but frequently he will have no wish to avoid it, and will purposely confound the two meanings, pointing out that in the law professed by those whom he seeks to convert, though false as a whole, there are still some eternal truths.

Each teacher takes as the foundation of his teaching the truths familiar to those whom he would convert.

And thus does Christ with the Jews, by whom both the one and the other law were called by the same name—"tora." Christ, in the law of Moses (and yet more in the law of the prophets, especially of Isaiah, whose words he so frequently quotes), admits the existence of eternal and divine truths agreeing with the eternal law, and these, as expressing love to God and to our neighbour, he takes for the groundwork of his own teaching.

Christ many times expresses the same idea. He says (Luke x. 26), "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Of a surety eternal truth may be found in the law, if we read it aright. More than once he shows them that the commandment of their law, to love God and our neighbour, is a precept of the eternal law



(Matt. xiii. 52). After the many parables, in which he explains to his disciples the meaning of his teaching, at the end, as if referring to all that had gone before, he says, "Every scribe [that is, every one who can read and write] who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure [together, without distinction] things new and old."

St. Ireneus, and all the Church after him, took these words in this very meaning, but, quite arbitrarily and in opposition to their sense, supposed them to include also the proposition that all that is old is sacred. Their interpretation is clearly this, that whoever seeks what is good must take the old with the new, and reject nothing simply because it is old. Christ by no means rejects what is eternal in the old law; but when the Jews speak to him of the law as a whole, or of its peculiar forms, he says that it is impossible to put new wine into old skins.

Christ could not confirm the law as a whole, nor could he reject both it and the prophets—the law in which it is said love thy neighbour as thyself, and the prophets whose words he so often used for his own ideas.

Hence it comes that instead of taking these simple words in their plain meaning, as they are confirmed throughout by Christ's teaching, we have before us a cloudy interpretation, introducing contradictions where there are none, and destroying the essence of that teaching, by reducing it to mere words and by re-establishing in fact the Mosaic law in all its savage cruelty.

According to all the interpreters of the Church, especially from the fifth century downwards, Christ did not reject the written law, but confirmed it.

But how did he confirm it? How can the law of Christ be united to that of Moses?

To this there is no answer. The interpretations are a mere play upon words. They pretend that Christ fulfilled the Mosaic law and the prophecies, and that he fulfilled the law through man's acceptance of him. The only real question for a believer, how to unite two contradictory laws which equally determine the life of man, remains without even an attempt at decision, and the contradiction between the verse in which it is said that Christ came not to destroy the law, and the verse in which it is said, "Ye have heard that it was said—but I say unto you,"—and again between the spirit of the whole teaching of Moses and that of Christ remains in full force.

Let any one interested in this question, himself examine the interpretations of this passage by the writers of the Church from the days of St. Augustine to our own time, and these long dissertations will only convince him that not only is there to be found no explanation of the contradiction, but that others are artificially introduced which did not previously exist.

The impossible attempts to unite things which cannot be united show clearly that this union is not a mental error, but is due to a clear and definite idea that it is necessary. And why it is deemed necessary, is no less clear.

Here is what St. Augustine, in his commentary on the

Gospel of Matthew, says in answer to those who reject the law of Moses.

“On farther scrutiny of the old law, which commands us to pluck out an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, some at once exclaim, How can he be good who says these things? What can we say to them? This, that on the contrary they are the most perfect proof of the love of God for man. He ordained this law, not in order that we should pluck out each other's eyes, but that, fearing to undergo such evil from others, we should not ourselves inflict it. In the same way, when he threatened the inhabitants of Nineveh with ruin, He did not wish them to perish (for if He had wished it, He had only to be silent); He wished by these terrors to make them repent, that He might lay aside His wrath. Thus also, for those who are wicked enough to be ready to pluck out their neighbour's eyes, He appointed the punishment with the object that, in case they will not refrain of their own good will from this cruelty, fear at least should prevent their depriving others of sight. If this was cruelty, then it was also cruelty to forbid murder, to prohibit adultery. But to speak thus men must be mad, in the last stage of insanity. I, for my part, am so much afraid to call these ordinances cruel, that I should consider any others opposed to them unlawful acts, if I am to judge with a man's common sense. Thou sayest that God is cruel, because He commanded me to pluck out an eye for an eye; but I say if He had not given such commands, then might many more justly have called Him what thou hast named Him.” St. Augustine directly accepts the law of a tooth for a tooth as divine, and the opposite of

the law of a tooth for a tooth, that is, the teaching of Christ not to resist evil, as unlawful.

“Let us suppose that all law has been destroyed,” says St. Augustine elsewhere, “and that no one fears punishment, that all vicious men will be allowed to live, without any fear for the consequences, after their own inclinations—adulterers, murderers, thieves, and perjurers. Will not all then be brought low, towns, market-places, the earth, the sea? Will not the universe be filled with countless crimes and murders? This is evident to all. If, even while we have laws, terrors and threats, the designs of the wicked can hardly be restrained, what would hinder men deciding for evil, when these impediments were removed? What woes would not then burst over the life of man? Not only is there cruelty, when the wicked are allowed to do what pleases them, but also when the man who has committed no injustice is left to suffer innocently without the slightest defence. Tell me, were any one to collect from all parts wicked men, arm them with swords, and order them to go throughout the town, killing all they met, could there be anything more inhuman? On the contrary, should some one else bind these armed men, and by force confine them in a prison, delivering out of their lawless hands those threatened with death, could there be anything more humane?”

(St. Augustine does not say, how any one else is to determine who are wicked. What if he himself were wicked, and imprisoned the good?) “Now apply these examples to the law. The one, who bids us to pluck out an eye for an eye, imposes on the souls of the vicious the same terror as that produced by strong fetters, and

is compared to the one who binds the armed men ; but he who would appoint no punishment for the criminals, would arm them with fearlessness for consequences, and would be like the man who gave out swords to the wicked and sent them through the town."

If St. Augustine acknowledged the law of Christ, he ought to have made plain who it is that will pluck out eyes and teeth, and cast men into prison. If He who bids us do so, that is, God, were Himself to act, there would be no contradiction ; but it is to be done by men to men, and the Son of God has bid men not to do it. God said, Do this ; the Son said, Do it not. One of these two commandments we must accept, and St. Augustine, and with him the whole Church, accepts the command of God the Father, that is of Moses, and rejects the command of the Son, that is of Christ, whose teaching he nevertheless professes to acknowledge. Christ put aside the Mosaic law, and gave his own instead.

For a man who believes in Christ there is no contradiction at all ; disregarding the law of Moses, he accepts only the law of Christ, and fulfils it. For a man who believes in the law of Moses there is also no contradiction. The Hebrews consider Christ's teaching to be vain words, and believe in the law of Moses. The contradiction exists only for those who wish to live after the law of Moses, and yet assure themselves and others that they believe in the law of Christ, for those whom Christ calls hypocrites and a race of vipers.

Instead of accepting one or the other, the law of Moses or the law of Christ, both are accepted as divinely inspired truths.

But, when the hard facts of life come into question, then the law of Christ is left and the law of Moses taken.

In this false interpretation, if we probe its meaning, there lies the terrible drama of the strife of evil and darkness with goodness and light.

To the Hebrew people, embarrassed by countless material rules, ordained on them by the Levites as divine law, and stamped each one with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," in their midst, appears Christ. He found not only the relation of man to God, his sacrifices, his feasts and fasts, but the relations of man to his fellow-man, whether national, civil, and domestic, all the details of individual life—circumcision, ablution both of the body and the cup, dress—all, down to the smallest trifles, accepted as the command, the law of God.

What was possible, I say, not to the God-Christ, but even only to a prophet, to the most ordinary teacher, in dealing with such a people but to destroy such a law? Christ, like all prophets, takes from that which men believe to be the law of God only what is truly God's law, takes the groundwork, and throwing aside all the rest, binds that groundwork into his own exposition of the eternal law. It is not necessary to destroy all, but it is most necessary to destroy the idea that the old law is of necessity vital in all its bearings. This Christ does ; for this he is reproached with destroying the law of God ; and for this he is put to death.

But his teaching remains with his disciples ; it passes into another state of society, into other ages.

Under these altered conditions as time goes on this

teaching is again overgrown with the same excrescences, the same interpretations and explanations; the mean inventions of man again replace the inspiration of the Divinity.

Where once was heard, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," now runs the formula, "It hath pleased us and the Holy Ghost;" the spirit is once more sacrificed to the letter. And, most astounding of all, the teaching of Christ becomes involved with that "tora," in the sense of the written law, which he could not but condemn. This "tora" is accepted as the inspired issue of Christ's own mind, that is, of the Holy Ghost, and he himself is caught in the web of his own weaving; his whole teaching is reduced to nought.

This is why, 1800 years after Christ taught, I was placed in the strange position of having to search for the meaning of his teaching as for something new.

Yet in reality I made no discovery. I did no more than all do who are truly seekers of God and His law. I perceived the existence of this eternal law in the midst of the confusion which men have called by its name.

## VI.

AND thus, when I understood the law of Christ to be the law of Christ, and not that of Moses *and* Christ; when I understood that it distinctly denies the law of Moses, the Gospels were to me no longer a heap of obscure and fragmentary contradictions; they formed in my mind a single indivisible whole, from which stood forth complete



the grand principles of Christ's teaching, expressed in five simple and clear commandments (Matt. v. 21-48) accessible to all men, but which to me had hitherto been a sealed book.

Through all the Gospels run the commandments of Christ, and our obligations to obey them.

All theologians *speak* of the commandments of Christ, but what they *were* I had hitherto not known. To me it had seemed that they consisted in loving God and our neighbour as we love ourselves. I had not seen that this could not be called the commandment of Christ, because it is the commandment of the old Mosaic law.

The words (Matt. v. 19), "Whosoever therefore shall break one of *these* least *commandments*, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," I had thought referred to the commandments of Moses. It had never entered my head that the verses (Matt. v. 21-48) clearly and definitely express the new commandments of Christ. I did not see that, in the passage where he says, "Ye have heard that it was said—but I say unto you," his new commandments are distinctly declared, making in all, if we count by the number of references to the ancient law (taking the two references about adultery as one) five new, clear, and definite commandments.

Of the beatitudes and their exact number I had heard, and had been taught all about them in my lessons of divinity; but I had never heard of the commandments of Christ. To my own great astonishment I found that I had to discover them for myself.



And this is how the discovery came about. In Matthew (v. 21-26) it is said: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing."

At the time when I first recognized the true bearing of the commandment not to resist evil, I began to think that to this passage also there must be a distinct significance applicable to everyday life.

The meaning I had formerly given to these words was, always to avoid anger, never to use abusive language, to live in peace with all men; but in the text I found a word which annulled that meaning. We are told not to be angry without cause,\* and therefore the passage cannot prescribe unconditional peace. Troubled solely

\* The Revised Version gives these words only in margin, but the Russian text, like our own Authorized Version, includes them.—H. F. B.

by these words, I turned for the resolution of my doubts to the interpretations of the theologians, and found, to my surprise, that the Fathers were chiefly occupied with deciding the cases in which anger was excusable, and in which it was not. All the interpreters of the Church, relying principally on the words *without cause*, explain the passage thus—we must not offend the innocent, nor use abusive language ; but anger is not always unjust ; and then, to confirm their explanation, they quote examples of the anger of the apostles and the saints.

I was forced to acknowledge that anger, as they express it, for the glory of God, is not forbidden, though contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel ; and that this conclusion is justly founded on the words “*without cause*” in the twenty-second verse. These words changed the meaning of the whole passage.

Do not be angry *without cause*.

Christ enjoins us to forgive all men, to forgive to the end, even as he himself forgave when he forbids Peter to be angry with Malchus. When Peter opposed his master's arrest, it would surely seem that he acted not without cause. Yet Christ, who thus forgives, says explicitly to man, do not be angry *without cause* ; and by that saying permits men to be angry when they have just cause. Christ preaches peace to all men, and then, as if defending himself against the supposition that this commandment is of universal application, shows that there are cases when anger is lawful by adding the words “without cause.”

In the commentaries it is explained that there are times and seasons when anger is just. But who, said

I, is to be the judge of these times and seasons? I have never yet seen angry people who did not think their anger just. All men believe their anger to be lawful and even needful. These words destroyed the whole meaning of the verse, but these words were in the Holy Scriptures, and I could not erase them. To me they seemed as if instead of the words "*Love thy neighbour,*" had stood "*Love thy good neighbour,*" or "*Love the neighbour who is agreeable to thee.*"

Thus was the whole sense of this passage destroyed for me by the words *without cause*. Those verses which enjoin us before prayer to be reconciled with those who have any cause of offence against us, which, unconnected with the words *without cause*, would have a positive meaning—received in this wise, could now only have a conditional one.

Christ, I thought, must surely have forbidden anger in every case, must have enjoined on all men to abstain from ill-will of all kinds. Before you offer your gift [that is, before you enter into relation with God], consider if there be not some one who is angry with you, with cause or *without*, and if such there be, first go and be reconciled to him, and afterwards offer your gift [or pray]. So I had understood this passage, but from the commentaries it seemed that henceforth I must take it in a conditional sense only.

All the interpretations are at one that we must strive to be at peace with all men, but if, through the depravity of those who are at enmity with us, that may not be, we must be reconciled with them in our hearts and thoughts, and then their ill-will cannot hinder our own

prayers. Moreover, the words, Whosoever shall say Raca and fool shall be in danger, had always seemed to me strange and obscure. If it is generally forbidden to use abusive language, for what purpose are examples selected so weak as hardly to come within the category of abuse at all? And then, why such a fearful threat against the use of a word so comparatively harmless as Raca, that is, an insignificant fellow? This was not clear.

I felt that here also was the same misunderstanding as had before obscured the words "judge not." I felt that, as with the interpretation of the latter, so here, what was simple, important, definite, and capable of practical application, had been made cloudy and indistinct. I felt that Christ could not have intended the words, Go and be reconciled, to have the popular significance, be reconciled in your thoughts. What is the meaning of being reconciled in our thoughts? I believed that Christ had repeated the saying of the prophet, that he desired not sacrifice, but mercy, that is, love to our fellow-men, and that in consequence he taught that if we would truly please God, we must, before morning and evening prayer, at mass or vespers, consider if any man had anything against us, and if so, go and do what might appease him, before we offered our prayers to God.

But what about this phrase, *in our thoughts*? I felt that this interpretation, so destructive of all clear and positive meaning, was founded upon the words, *without cause*. Strike them out, and the sense would be clear. But against this conception were all the commentators

and the Canonical Gospel, which adopts the words *without cause*. If I give way in this instance, I may give way in another at my own discretion ; others may do the same. The whole difficulty hung on two words ; were it not for them all would be clear.

I will make an attempt to examine into the philological value of these words, to explain them so that they shall not destroy the sense of the passage. I take a lexicon, and find that the Greek word for the expression. "*without cause*," εἰκη, means also *aimlessly, unadvisedly* ; I endeavour to find a less destructive meaning, but without success. Turning from the lexicon to the context, I find that the word is only used in the Gospel twice, in this very passage. In the Epistles it is used several times. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 2) it is used exactly in this sense. Consequently there was no possibility of explaining the word otherwise ; it was necessary to acknowledge that Christ said, *Do not be angry without cause*.

I must confess that to admit that Christ in this passage could use language so obscure as to have no positive significance, was to me tantamount with rejecting the whole Gospel. There remained this one last hope—was the word to be found in all the copies ? I consulted the variations ; I searched through Griesbach, who gives them all, how, in what copies, and by what Fathers, this explanation or that is employed. I was delighted to find that there were many references to the expression *without cause*, many variations of it. The majority of the copies of the Gospels and of the Fathers omitted it entirely, being clearly, therefore, of

the same mind as myself. I looked into Tischendorf, into one of the oldest copies, and *without cause* was not there. I took up Luther's translation—which, indeed, might have shown me the shortest road at first—and again *without cause* was wanting.

This expression, so destructive of the true teaching of Christ, was an interpolation of the fifth century, and not to be found in the most authentic copies of the Gospel.

A man had been found to add these words, and others to approve and explain his addition !

Christ could not have used and did not use this terrible expression ; the simple plain meaning of the whole passage, as it had struck me at first, as it must strike every one, was the true one.

Moreover, as soon as I understood that the words of Christ forbade anger at all times and against all men, the prohibition of the words *Raca* and *fool*, which had formerly troubled me, received another interpretation than that of prohibiting abusive language only.

The strange untranslated Hebrew word *Raca* gave me this clue. *Raca* means *one trodden down, annihilated, not existing* ; the word *Rak* is much in use, and has the sense of exclusion, meaning *only not*. *Raca* means a man unworthy to be called a man. The plural form, *rekin*, is used in the book of Judges (ix. 4), where it means "lost persons." This, then, is the word which Christ forbids to be used to any one ; and why not forbid also the use of that other word "fool" [that is, madman], which apparently relieves us from our general responsibility towards our fellow-men.

We are angry, we inflict injury upon others, and then in justification allege that the person with whom we are wrath is a lost or mad person. Thus Christ has forbidden these two words to be used of men or to men ; he forbids anger in all circumstances, nor will he allow any man to justify his wrath, because he deems another a lost or mad person.

Thus, instead of an obscure, indefinite, and unimportant expression, capable of being explained in many and arbitrary ways, I found in the verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the twenty-first to the twenty-sixth inclusive, clearly and definitely laid down, the first commandment of Christ, Live in peace with all men ; account your anger against no man just ; believe or call no man either lost or mad ; think not your own anger to be justified, and think not the anger of others against yourself to be unjustified ; consequently, if there be any one who is angered against you, even without cause, before praying go and put away all unfriendly feeling. For the future strive to put an end to all enmity between yourself and others, lest it increase and destroy you.

And the second commandment appeared to me to stand out with the same clearness. In the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the twenty-seventh to the thirtieth verse inclusive, it is said in reference to the old law, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus xx. 14-28) : but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee



that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell."

In the thirty-first verse it is said that, if any one put away his wife, he shall give her a writing of divorcement (Deut. xxiv. 1), and in verse thirty-two follows : " But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress : and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."

And these words I took to mean : a man has no right to admit even the thought of being united to any other woman than the one whom he has already chosen, and can never, as the law of Moses allowed, change that woman for another.

As in the first commandment against anger we are enjoined to put an end to it in its beginning (a commandment enforced by the parable of the man who is delivered to the judge), so here Christ says that adultery arises from men and women looking on each other as objects of carnal pleasure. To prevent this, we must banish all that excites the desires of the flesh, and, uniting ourselves to one wife, never repudiate her under any pretext whatever, for the repudiation of wives leads to divorce, and forsaken women seduce other men and are the causes of depravity in the world.

The wisdom of this commandment needed no thought. It avoided all the evils which threaten society from the relations between the sexes. Men, knowing that the



loose indulgence of their passions must lead them to dissension, will keep clear of all incentives to passion, and obeying the law of nature to live in couples, will keep that natural union inviolate. Thus there will be neither man nor woman living single deprived of married life, and thus the evils which spring from such solitude will cease to exist.

But the words, saving for the cause of fornication, understood in the sense that a man might divorce his wife for adultery, which had always astonished me in reading the Sermon on the Mount, astonished me now still more.

Not to speak of there being in the form in which this thought is expressed something not altogether worthy of the occasion, of there being side by side with the deepest truths of the discourse something like a formal note to a legal code, there was this strange exception to the general rule which contradicted the whole line of thought.

I consulted all the commentators, and they all (St. Chrysostom and others), even learned theologians and critics like Reuss, admitted that these words convey Christ's approval of divorce in the case of the wife's adultery, and that in the nineteenth chapter of the same Gospel, a like approbation is conveyed. I read and re-read the thirty-second verse, and each time it seemed to me more impossible to signify the approval of divorce. In order to make sure I compared all similar passages, and found in the Gospel of Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the explanation that marriage was indissoluble without exception.

In Luke (xvi. 18) it is said : " Every one that putteth

away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery."

In Mark (x. 5-12) there is the same clearness of expression: "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment, But from the beginning of the creation male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: And if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

So also in Matthew (xix. 4-9).

In the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (vii. 1-12), we find developed in detail the idea of the prevention of immorality by the union of husband and wife. That union is for life; each is to render to the other what is due, and it is also expressly said that in no circumstances shall the husband leave his wife for another, or the wife her husband.

According to Mark, Luke, and Paul divorce is not lawful. By the sense of the saying, that man and wife are one flesh, and their union of God, a saying repeated in two of the Gospels, divorce is not lawful. By the sense of the whole teaching of Christ, enjoining forgiveness of all injuries, even to the forgiving of a fallen wife,

divorce is not lawful; neither is it according to the sense of the whole passage, which explains that the putting away of a wife leads to immorality, and especially to the immorality of her who is put away.

On what, then, is based the interpretation that divorce for adultery on the part of the woman is lawful? On those words in the thirty-second verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew, which I found so strange, "saving for the cause of fornication." These words are explained by all to mean, that Christ permits divorce in case of the adultery of the wife; they are repeated in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, according to many copies of the Gospels, and by many of the Fathers, instead of the words, "for the sake of fornication."

Again I began to study these words, and long it was before I could understand them. I saw that here must be some error both in the translation and the explanation, but what it was I was long in discovering. And yet it was clearly in error. Christ setting his own commandment in direct opposition to that of Moses, by which every husband, in whose eyes his wife finds no favour, may give her a bill of divorcement, and send her out of his house, says, "I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress." In these words the law of Moses is not contradicted, nor is there any positive decision as to the legality of divorce. It is only said that putting away a wife leads to her becoming an adulteress, and yet forthwith an exception is made in the case of a wife already guilty of adultery.

This exception, relating to a wife guilty of adultery,

when the subject immediately on hand is the husband, is in itself strange and unexpected, but in this particular place it is simply foolish, because it destroys even the doubtful sense which the passage originally had.

It is said that the putting away of a wife drives her to adultery, and yet husbands are enjoined to put away adulterous wives, as if a woman once guilty of adultery would sin no more.

Nor was this all ; for, on studying the passage more attentively, I saw that it was not even grammatically correct. It is said, "Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress," and the sentence is complete. The question concerns the husband who, divorcing his wife, exposes her to the temptation of committing adultery, and then is added, "saving for the cause of fornication." If it is said that a husband who divorced his wife, saving when she had been faithless, was guilty of adultery, the proposition would be grammatically correct. But here the subject, "the husband who divorces," has only "causes" for an attribute. One cannot add to this the words, "saving for the cause of fornication." To which sentence, then, does this phrase belong, for it is evident that the husband, with or without the pretext of his wife's adultery, will expose her with equal certainty, if he divorce her? Take the following sentence : "He who refuses sustenance to his child, besides being guilty himself, causes him to become cruel."

This clearly cannot mean that the father may refuse to sustain his child if the latter be cruel, but that the father who refuses, besides being cruel himself, leads his

son into a similar sin. In the same way the Gospel expression would have sense, if for the words "cause of fornication" were to be substituted "for sensuality," "for incontinence," or something similar, expressing not an act but a quality.

I asked myself, Is it here simply said that whoever divorces his wife, besides being himself guilty of incontinence (for nearly all who divorce their wives do so with intent to take another) exposes her to sin?

If in the original text the word translated by "fornication" had the significance of incontinence (and might therefore be applied not to the wife but to the husband), the sense is clear.

Here, as often before, a perusal of the original confirmed my supposition beyond the possibility of a doubt.

The first thing which struck me in my investigation was that the word *πορνεία*, translated "fornication," is very different in meaning from *μοιχᾶσθαι*, the word generally used in that significance.

To see if the words might be synonymous, I consulted the lexicon, and found there that the word *πορνεία*, which answers to the Hebrew "zono," the Latin "fornicatio," the German "hurerei," the French "libertinage," the English "incontinence," has a precise meaning, and has not in any lexicon the sense of an "act of adultery," "adultère," "ehebruch," as Luther and the Germans translate it.

It signifies a state of moral depravity, a quality, not an act, and can never be translated by "adultery."

I discovered also that the word "adultery" is always rendered throughout the Gospels as in this passage by

the word *μοιχεύω*. I had only to correct this clearly intentional error, for the sense given by commentators to this passage and the context in the nineteenth chapter to become absolutely inadmissible, and for the sense in which the word *πορνεία* refers entirely to the husband to become evident.

The translation in full is, *παρεκτός* besides *λόγου* the crime *πορνείας* of incontinence, *ποιεῖ* it obliges *αὐτήν* her *μοιχᾶσθαι* to be an adulteress.

The same sense appears in the nineteenth chapter.

It is only necessary to alter the incorrect translation of *πορνεία* by putting "incontinence" for "adultery," and it is clear that *ἐν μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ* cannot apply to the woman, but that both it and the sentence quoted above can only have reference to the incontinence of the husband, and the meaning at length becomes apparent that Christ in answering the Pharisees, who thought that if a man put away his wife, not for the sake of living loosely, but in order to marry another, he does not commit adultery, says that this is not so, but that such legal union is none the less the crime they sought to avoid.

It was this simple meaning, flowing from the words themselves and from the spirit of the whole teaching, which I was obliged to find out for myself, and found only with the greatest difficulty. It is only too true, that if we read these words in the German or French\* version, where it is distinctly stated, "pour cause d'infidélité," or "à moins que cela ne soit pour cause d'infidélité," we cannot guess that the real meaning is

\* The same difficulty occurs in the English version.—ED.

something quite different. The word *παρεκτός* in the lexicons means, *excepté, ausgenōmen, besides*, but it is translated by a whole proposition, *à moins que cela ne soit*. The word *πορνείας* is translated *infidélité, ehēkbruch, adultery*, and on this intentional mutilation of the text is founded an interpretation, which destroys the moral, the religious, the grammatical, and the logical meaning of the words of Christ.

Thus the truth, to me at once so awful and yet welcome, the truth that Christ's teaching was both simple and clear, that his precepts were of the highest importance and strictly defined, but that modern interpretation, based on the wish to justify existing evils, had so obscured his words that their real meaning was hard indeed to discover—this double truth was once more confirmed.

It was clear to me, that it would be easier to reach the meaning of the Gospels, were half the original text burnt or erased, than it is now with so many unconscientious commentaries, the object of which is to pervert and conceal the true meaning. In this case it was even clearer to me than in my former difficulty, that some private motive, to justify, for example, the divorce of an Ivan the Terrible, might have brought the Gospel doctrine of marriage into hopeless obscurity.

Do not give way to the desires of the flesh ; but every man in possession of his natural powers, take to himself a wife ; let every woman take a husband ; let a man have only one wife, and a woman only one husband ; and let them under no pretext whatever dissolve the personal relations consequent on marriage.



Following close upon this second commandment comes another reference to the old law, and then the third commandment is declared (Matt. v. 33-37): "Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths (Lev. xix. 12; Deut. xxiii. 21): but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

This passage in my former studies had always puzzled me. It did not trouble me by its obscurity, like that relating to divorce, nor by its contradiction of other passages, like the prohibition of anger without a cause, nor by any difficulty in fulfilling it, like the passage about turning the other cheek to the smiter. It troubled me, on the contrary, by its clearness, by its simplicity and easiness. Side by side with precepts whose depth and meaning awed and touched my heart, I came suddenly upon a rule not wanted by me, futile, easy, and carrying with it no consequences for myself or others. I had never sworn by Jerusalem, or by God, and it cost me nothing to abstain from doing so; nor could I understand what importance to others my fulfilment or negligence of this commandment would be. Anxious for an explanation of this puzzling simplicity, I had recourse once more to the commentators, and this time they helped me.



All the commentators see in these words a confirmation of the third commandment of Moses, not to swear by the name of God. They explain that Christ, like Moses, forbids the taking of God's name in vain. But, in addition to this, they also hold that this rule of Christ, not to swear, is not always binding on us, and in no way applies to the oaths which a citizen is called upon to take to the constituted authorities. Thus, the text of Holy Scripture is searched, not in order to confirm the plain meaning of what Christ ordained, but in order to prove that men may and ought to leave it unfulfilled.

It is said, that Christ himself confirmed the use of oaths before the judgment seat, when to the words of the high priest, I adjure thee by the living God, he answered, Thou hast said ; that the Apostle Paul calls God to witness to the truth of his words, and that is clearly an oath ; that oaths were prescribed by the law of Moses, and not revoked by Christ ; that the only oaths forbidden are vain ones, hypocritical ones, like those of the Pharisees.

As soon as I saw the sense and drift of these explanations, I understood that this commandment was by no means so insignificant, easy, and immaterial, as I had supposed, while I did not count among the oaths forbidden those which a citizen is called upon to take by the State.

I asked myself then, whether here also were not forbidden the oaths so carefully guarded by the writers of the Church, the oath without which the division of men into kingdoms and states was impossible, without which there could be no military class. Soldiers are

men who practise violence, and they call themselves "sworn." \* If I asked my grenadier how he reconciled the difference between the Gospels and the military regulations, he would reply that he had taken an oath, he had sworn, that is to say, on the Testament. Such is the answer I have invariably received from military men. An oath is such a necessary part of the organization of that terrible evil which issues in violence and war, that in France, where Christianity is denied, oaths are still enforced.

Surely, if Christ had not said, Swear not at all, he should have said so. He came to destroy evil on earth, and had he not forbidden all swearing, how terrible an evil would have been left. It may be said that in his time this evil was not so marked, but that is not true. Epictetus and Seneca both spoke against the practice of administering oaths to any one; they are forbidden also in the laws of Manu. On what ground shall I say that Christ did not perceive this evil? How can I say that, when he has pointed it out directly and with such clearness?

Christ said, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." This expression is as simple, clear, and unhesitating as the words, judge not, and condemn not, and requires as little explanation; particularly as it is further explained that whatever is required of us more than the answer Yea or Nay, is from the source of evil.

If the teaching of Christ be to fulfil the will of God, how can a man swear to fulfil the will of a fellow man? The will of God may not accord with the will of a man.

\* An old Russian alternative for soldier is "sworn."—ED.

Moreover, in this very place Christ himself says so (ver. 36), Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for not only thy head but every hair on it is in the hands of God. And the same is said by the Apostle James, as if by way of conclusion, in the last chapter of his Epistle (ver. 12): "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment." The apostle lays down distinctly why we must not swear: an oath in itself may seem not criminal, but through it we fall under judgment, and, therefore, swear not at all. Can anything be more clear than the words both of Christ and his apostle?

So puzzled, however, had I been, that for a long time I was in doubt as to their true meaning. I asked myself, how is it, then, that we all take oaths on the Gospel? It is impossible that these words should have been so misinterpreted.

But I had read the commentaries, and seen that this impossibility had been accomplished.

What happened in the interpretation of the passages not to judge, not to be angry with any one, not to destroy the union between husband and wife, had taken place here also.

We establish our own social arrangements, we get attached to them, and wish to consider them sacred. Christ, whom we believe to be God, comes among us and tells us that our social order is bad. We confess him to be God, but we will not give up our social order at his bidding. What are we to do? Where

we can, we interpolate the words "without cause." When we can, we, like partial judges in the same way, abolish the rule against anger, wrest the letter of the law away from the intention of the law-giver, and instead of the commandment never to divorce a wife, we read that divorce is lawful. Where it is impossible to alter the strict sense of the words, as in judge not, and condemn not, and in swear not at all, we must boldly act in direct contradiction to the whole teaching, while affirming that we follow it. In very truth the chief obstacle to understanding the law against the swearing of oaths, has been that seeming Christian teachers with more than usual boldness have forced men, by the Gospel itself to swear on the Gospel; or in other words have forced them to do what is contrary to the Gospel.

How can a man who is obliged to swear on the cross and the Gospel, stop to think that the cross is sacred only because on it was crucified the One who forbade him to swear, and that while taking the oath he perhaps kisses as a holy thing the very\* place where it is clearly and distinctly written, *Swear not at all?*

This boldness, however, did not surprise me. In Matthew v. 33-37, I saw how distinct was the commandment, and how easy of fulfilment, Swear not at all to any man at any time, for every oath is extorted from men for evil.

Again, a reference to the old law, and a fourth commandment is declared (Matt. v. 38-42; Luke vi.

\* In Russia the Testament is opened for the administration of oaths.—H. F. B.

29, 30): "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

I have already spoken of the clear and definite meaning of these words, and of how little our right to explain them away, and to pervert them. The interpretations of this passage, from the time of Chrysostom to our own, have indeed been astonishing. These words are pleasing to all men, and every one is led to thoughts of deep moment in considering them, with this one exception, *that we do not allow them the meaning which they really have.*

Theological writers, in no way hindered by the authority of him whom they confess as God, calmly put a limit to the meaning of his words.

They say, It is of course understood that all the commandments about bearing with offences, and refraining from vengeance, being specially directed against the Jewish love of revenge, exclude neither the necessity of public measures for the suppression of evil and the punishment of those offenders who do evil, nor the private efforts of the individual to uphold the integrity of justice; to bring offenders to their senses, and to thwart the wrong-doing of evil-minded men. Were this not so, they say, the spiritual laws of Christ would, after

the manner of the Jews, be turned into a mere dead letter to be used for the furtherance of evil and the crushing of virtue. The love of a Christian should be as the love of God ; but the latter restrains and *punishes evil* only when it is derogatory to his glory or imperils the salvation of men ; in all other cases it behoves us energetically to restrain and punish evil, and the obligation to do so falls naturally on the State authorities. (The commentary on the Gospel of the Archbishop Michael is altogether based on the interpretations of the Fathers.)

Learned and free-thinking Christians do not tie themselves to the words of Christ, but correct him. They allow them to be very lofty sentiments, but devoid of all possibility of a practical application to life, for they would destroy the whole of that social order which we have so well arranged. This is the theory of Renan, Strauss, and of all the freethinking commentators.

But we have only to treat the words of Christ as we treat the words of any one whom we meet and converse with, we have only to admit that he says what he means, to get rid of the necessity for any deep train of thought.

Christ says, I consider your way of securing personal safety foolish and bad, and in its stead I offer you another. He then goes on to speak the words contained in the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the thirty-eighth to the forty-second verse. It would seem that, before correcting these words, it is necessary to understand them. But this is exactly what nobody wishes to do ; having decided beforehand that the social order under which we live, and which would be destroyed by them, is the sacred law of humanity.

I myself never thought our life, as constituted, either good or sacred, and for that reason, perhaps, came to the right understanding of this commandment sooner than others. And when I had so understood it, its truth, exactness, and clearness made a deep impression on me. Christ says, you wish to destroy evil by evil, but that is unreasonable. That there may be no evil do none yourselves. He then enumerates in order the cases in which we are accustomed to do evil, and forbids us in such cases so to act.

This fourth commandment of Christ was the first which I understood rightly, and it gave me a key to the meanings of all the others. The fourth commandment, so simple, clear, and easy of fulfilment, says, Never resist evil by force ; do not oppose violence to violence : if beaten endure with patience ; if despoiled bear with the spoiler ; if forced to labour, labour ; if from you be taken that which you account your own, let it freely go.

Next, after the customary reference to the old law, follows the fifth commandment (Matt. v. 43-48), "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy (Lev. xix. 17, 18) : but I say unto you love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the Gentiles the same ? Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."



These verses had previously seemed to me an explanation, a strengthening, nay, even an exaggeration of the previous commandment, "Resist not evil." But when I found that each passage, which begins with a reference to the old law, had its own simple substantive meaning, and one capable of being applied in practice, I felt that it must be the same in this case. After each reference a commandment is declared, and each verse has a meaning and cannot be struck out. Here again, then, it must be the same. The last words repeated by Luke, that God makes no distinction of persons and does good to all, and that we therefore should be like God, and not act like the Gentiles who make such distinctions, but should love all men, and do good to all alike—these words were clear, they were for me a confirmation and explanation of some clear rule, but it was long before I could understand what that rule was.

Love your enemies! That was a thing impossible, one of those magnificent expressions which we can only look upon as manifestations of an unattainable moral ideal. It was either too much, or nothing at all. We may choose not to injure an enemy, but love him we cannot. Christ could not prescribe an impossible thing.

Moreover, is there not something doubtful in the first words in reference to the old law, *hate thine enemy*? In the previous passages Christ quotes the law of Moses with verbal exactness, but here he quotes words which were never spoken. He, as it were, calumniates the law.

The commentaries did not help me at all. In all the interpretations it is admitted that the words, "*hate*



*thine enemy*," are not in the law of Moses, but the explanation of this incorrect rendering of the law is nowhere given. The difficulty of loving evil men, your enemies, is allowed, and Christ's words are mostly corrected to mean that, though we cannot love our enemies, we may refrain from wishing them or doing them any ill. Meanwhile we are taught that we may, that we ought, to convict our enemies, that is to say, to resist them. We are told of different steps towards the attainment of this virtuous end, and the final result of the interpretation of the Church is that Christ, for some unknown reason, quoted the law of Moses incorrectly, using language which, magnificent as it is, is in reality idle and incapable of being practically applied.

It seemed to me that this could not be. Surely, here also should be the same clear and definite sense as in the first four commandments. In order to comprehend this sense, I first of all strove to get hold of the meaning of this incorrect reference to the law: "Ye have heard that it was said . . . hate thine enemy."

It is not without a reason that Christ quotes the very words of the law, as he declares each of his rules—do not kill, do not commit adultery, and so on; and to them opposes his own teaching. Without understanding his own interpretation of the law quoted by him, we cannot understand what it is that he enjoins on us. In the commentaries it is expressly stated (and indeed it is impossible to avoid the statement), that he quotes words which are not in the law, but it is not explained why he does so, and what this incorrect reference signifies.

It appeared to me that the first thing needful was to

explain Christ's intention in doing this, and I asked myself what it might be. In all his previous references to the law, a single precept is alone quoted—do not kill, do not commit adultery, keep your oath, a tooth for a tooth—and then there is opposed to each the answering precept of his own teaching.

Here two precepts are quoted directly contrary to one another; you have been told—love your neighbour and hate your enemy, so that clearly the new law must be based upon this difference between the two precepts of the old law with respect to a neighbour and an enemy.

In order to understand more clearly in what this difference consisted, I asked myself what the words neighbour and enemy signified in the Gospel language. After looking into the lexicons and searching the Bible for parallel passages, I convinced myself that neighbour in the Jewish tongue simply meant a Jew. Neighbour is used in this sense in the parable of the Samaritan. A teacher of the Jewish law could not understand a Samaritan to be his neighbour. The word is used in the same sense again in the Acts (vii. 27). In the language of the Gospels it signifies, a fellow-countryman, a man belonging to the same nationality. So that, supposing the opposition which Christ brings out in this passage by quoting from the old law, "Ye have heard that it was said love your neighbours and hate thine enemy," to be that between a countryman and a foreigner, I asked myself what an enemy meant to the mind of a Jew, and found the confirmation of my supposition. The word enemy is seldom used in the

Gospels in a private or personal sense, but almost always in a public and national one (Luke i. 71-74; Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 43; and in other places). The singular number, in which the word "enemy" is employed in these verses, in the expression "hate thine enemy," shows me that a national enemy is here spoken of. In the Old Testament for the same meaning the singular number is always employed.

As soon as I understood this, my difficulty vanished.

For what purpose could Christ, so accurate in his quotations from the law, in this one instance have employed words not to be found in it? It is only necessary to take the word enemy in a national sense, and the word neighbour in that of a fellow-countryman, for the whole difficulty to disappear. Christ speaks of the way in which the law of Moses prescribes that the Hebrews should treat a national enemy. All the passages, spread over the different books of the Scriptures, in which it is prescribed to the Jews to oppress, slay, and destroy other nations, are brought together by Christ into one saying, *Thou shalt hate or do evil to thine enemy*. He says, You have been told to love your own people, and to hate the enemy of your race, but I tell you to love all without distinction of nationality.

No sooner, however, had these words become clear to me than another great difficulty was solved—how I was to understand the words, Love your enemies. It is impossible to love our personal enemies, but men of a hostile nationality we *can* love as well as those of our own. Consequently, it now became evident to me that, in saying, You have been told, love your

neighbour and hate your enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, Christ alludes to the fact, that all men have been accustomed to consider those of their own nation as their neighbours, and those of other nationalities as their enemies; it was also clear to me that he orders men not to do this. He really says, By the law of Moses a distinction is made between Jews and those who, not being Jews, are therefore the national enemy, but I say unto you, you must not make this distinction. It agrees with this precept that he should next, according both to Matthew and Luke, declare that to God all men are equal, on all the same sun shines and the same rain falls. God makes no difference between nations, but sends good to them all alike. And thus should men behave, treating all their fellows alike, and not dividing them like the Gentiles, into different and hostile nationalities.

I thus again found confirmation of the simple, important, clear, and practical meaning of the words of Christ. Again, instead of the language of an obscure and indefinite philosophy, there stood before me a clear, definite, important, and practical rule—to make no difference between our own and other nations, never to act in conformity with such a difference, that is, never to provoke nor take part in war, and to treat all men of what nationality soever as though they belonged to our own.

All this was now so simple and clear, that I was astonished that I had not perceived it at the first glance.

The cause of my misapprehension was again that which had made the prohibition of tribunals and oaths so inexplicable to me. It was not easy to see that the

courts, the sittings of which are opened with Christian prayers, which are blessed by those who call themselves the guardians of Christ's law, are at variance with the principles of Christ's teaching, are even repugnant to it.

It was yet more difficult to see that the oath which the special guardians of the law of Christ induce all men to take, is expressly forbidden by that law ; but to see that the sentiment universally regarded as not only necessary and natural, but even admirable and nobly courageous, to see that love for our native land, the defence, the exaltation of her, the struggle against her enemies, and so forth, are not only offences against the law of Christ, but constitute a manifest rejection of him—to see this, I say, was difficult indeed.

The life of mankind has now drifted so far away from the teaching of Christ that the very width of the separation has become the chief hindrance to our right understanding of it. We have so long shut our ears to, so long forgotten all the rules of conduct which he has given us, about our not being permitted to be angry with, much less kill, another fellow-creature, about the wrongfulness of defending ourselves, and the duty of turning the other cheek, about loving our enemies, that now, accustomed as we are to call those who devote their lives to murder, Christian warriors, accustomed to hear prayers addressed to Christ for victory over our enemies, we, resting our glory and our pride on murder, on that almost sacred symbol of murder, the sword, so far as to feel even shame at being found without it at our sides, we now absolutely believe, that

Christ did not prohibit war, and that had he designed to do so he would have spoken more clearly.

We forget that Christ could not conceive that men, who accepted his teaching of humility, love, and brotherhood, could be capable of compassing the murder of their brethren with a quiet conscience. That he could not conceive, and consequently could no more have forbidden a Christian to take part in war, than a father, instructing his son how to live honestly, to offend no one, and even to sacrifice himself to others could think of forbidding him to cut throats on the highway.

That it would be necessary to forbid a Christian to commit murder under the name of war never occurred to the apostles, nor to any disciple of Christ in the early ages of Christianity. Listen to what Origen says, in his answer to Celsus (Lib. viii. c. 73):—

“Then Celsus afterwards urges us to help the Prince with all our strength, to relieve him in his just quarrels, to fight with him, to bear arms under him, and, if he call upon us, to assist him in the conduct of his armies.

“Now it may be said as to this, that we do, as occasion requires, assist our princes, taking up (if I may so say), divine assistance and the whole armour of God. And these things we do, obeying the voice of the apostle when he says, ‘I exhort you therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks should be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority.’ And by how much any is the more godly, by so much the more efficient is he in helping princes than those soldiers who go forth to their armies and slay whomsoever they can of their enemies. Besides

which, we may say to those who are strangers to the faith, and who require us to fight for the common good, and to slay men : that even those among you who are priests of certain images, and have charge over the temples of those whom ye esteem gods, keep their right hand undefiled, and may on no account enlist in the army." And he ends the chapter, "Yea, we rather fight manfully for the Prince whilst we do not engage as soldiers under him though he urge us to do so ; but we fight for him, training our own camp in righteousness, through continual communion with God."

This was the way in which the Christians of the earlier ages bore themselves towards war, in which their teachers, addressing themselves to the powerful of the earth, spoke of it, and that at a time when martyrs perished by hundreds and by thousands for professing the faith of Christ.

And now? Now there is not even a question as to whether a Christian may or may not take part in war. All the young men who are educated in the so-called Christian law of the Church, when they have reached a certain age, are every autumn taken before the military authorities, and, with the help of the pastors of the Church, there renounce the law of Christ. It is not long since that a peasant refused, on gospel grounds, to serve in the army. The teachers of the Church expounded to him his error, but, as he believed not them but Christ, he was thrown into prison, and kept there until he had changed his belief. And this eighteen hundred years after God has laid His clear commandment on all Christians : Count not the men of other nations your



enemies, but count all men your brethren, and treat all as you treat those of your own nation ; therefore not only do not slay those whom you call your enemies, but love them, and do good to them.

With this understanding, then, of the commandments of Christ, which are as simple and definite as they are unshaken by any commentaries, I turned to consider what might have happened, had the Christian world obeyed them not with mere lip-service, but making them the rule of life for the happiness of man ? How would it be, if men believed in the obligation laid on them by these commandments at least as firmly as they believe in daily prayer, in going to church on Sunday, in fasting on Friday, at Lent, and at other appointed seasons ? How would it be, if men believed in these commandments as they do in the observances of the Church ?

And thereupon I fell to imagining a truly Christian society, living after, and teaching the younger generation to abide by, these commandments. I pictured to myself how from childhood we should be taught, both by word and by example, not as we are taught now, that a man must preserve his dignity, must stand up for his rights against others (which can never be done without humiliating and offending them), but that no man has any rights of any kind, nor can be higher or lower than another, save only that he is lowest and basest of all who would stand highest. I fancied how we should learn that no position in life degrades a man so much as his own anger, that the seeming insignificance or the madness of a man cannot justify my anger against him nor my separating myself from him.



Instead of the whole structure of our present life, from the plate-glass windows in the shops to the theatres, the novels, and women's dresses, all provocative of evil passions, I imagined a society taught by word and deed the baseness of finding amusement in immoral books, in theatres, and at balls ; taught that every act, having for its end the mere display and adornment of the body, is a mean and disgusting one.

Instead of the custom, considered necessary and even right, that a young man should live loosely before marriage ; instead of considering a way of life which separates married couples, natural ; instead of legalizing the position of the class of women who live by immorality ; instead of permitting and blessing divorce ; instead of all these things, I conceived our being taught, and practically convinced, that for a man to remain unmarried after the age of manhood is monstrous and shameful ; that for a man to leave his wife for another woman is not only an act as unnatural as incest, but is also cruel and inhuman.

Instead of that law which ordains that all our joys should be purchased and preserved for us by violence, instead of each of us being either the oppressed or an oppressor from childhood to extreme old age, I imagined that all we heard and saw around us should teach us the baseness and brutality of revenge, the shameful of violence, and assure us that the only true joys in life were those which need no force to guard. Again, I seemed to hear that the highest honours are not the due of those who despoil and tyrannize over others, but of those who yield to others and minister to them.

Instead of it being thought lawful and excellent for a man to bind by oath his most valuable possession—his life—to the will of another whom he knows not, I imagined ourselves taught to look upon the reasoning will of man as a sacred thing, which none ought to renounce, and on an oath sworn to any one on any account as a renunciation of our existence as reasoning beings, and an outrage against a holy thing.

I pictured to myself how, instead of those international hatreds, which, under the pretence of love for our native country, are instilled into us, instead of those glorifications of murderous wars, which from our childhood are presented to us as furnishing examples of the most valiant deeds, we might be taught horror and contempt for all the public, diplomatic, and military proceedings which entail the separation of men; how we might be taught to look upon the recognition of any particular kingdom or state, of particular laws, of the drawing of frontiers, the assignment of lands, as a proof of savage ignorance; on war, that is, on the slaying of men personally unknown to us, as the most frightful wickedness to which an erring and brutalized man can possibly descend. Imagining a society in which such belief flourished, I put to myself the question—how would life then be?

Formerly, when I understood the teaching of Christ otherwise, to the question, What change would take place in the world were we to follow his teaching, I had to answer, None. We shall all pray, all profit by the blessings of the Holy Communion, all believe in the salvation of the world by Christ, and yet that salvation

will still depend not on us, but on the coming of the end of all things. Christ will come at the appointed time in his glory to judge both the quick and the dead, and to establish the kingdom of God, independently of our life.

But the teaching of Christ, as I now saw it, had also another meaning ; the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth rested with ourselves. The fulfilment of Christ's teaching, as expressed in the five commandments, was the establishment of God's kingdom, the kingdom of peace on earth to all men. Peace to all men is the highest good which can be obtained on earth. This is how the kingdom of God appeared to all the Hebrew prophets ; this is how it has appeared, and still does appear to every feeling human heart. All prophecy promises peace and goodwill to man.

The essence of Christ's teaching is here, that the kingdom of God signifies peace to man. In the Sermon on the Mount, in the conversation with Nicodemus, in the charge to his own disciples, in all his discourses, Christ speaks only of the things which set man against man, which hinder him from peace and the kingdom of heaven. The parables are all really a description of the kingdom of God, with this injunction, that only those that love their brethren, and are at peace with them, can enter into that kingdom. John the Baptist, the predecessor of Christ, says that the kingdom of God draws near, and that Jesus Christ will give it to the world.

Christ says, that he has brought peace unto the world (John xiv. 27). "Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I

unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."

We see now that these five commandments of Christ really do give peace to man. All five have the same singleness of aim. Men have only to believe in the teaching of Christ and to fulfil it, and there shall be peace on earth, not a peace made by men, temporary, accidental, partial, but a peace which shall be universal, inviolable, and eternal.

The first commandment says, Be at peace with all men ; consider no man as insignificant, or foolish (Matt. v. 22). If peace be broken, strive to re-establish it with all your strength. The service of God is the destruction of enmity. Be reconciled for the least difference, that you may not lose the true life. In this commandment all is said ; but Christ, foreseeing how strongly the temptations of the world would make against peace, includes them also in his second commandment. In spite of physical beauty, resist carnal desires ; be a husband to one wife only, a wife to one husband, and quit each other under no pretext. Then comes the temptation to take oaths. Know that this is an evil, and swear not at all. The fourth temptation is revenge, miscalled human justice. Seek no vengeance, nor justify yourself in that you have been offended, but bear with injuries and render not evil for evil. The fifth temptation is the difference between nationalities, the enmity between races and kingdoms. Know, that all men are brothers and sons of the one God ; break peace with no man under the plea of national aims. If one of these commandments be left unfulfilled by men, peace will be

broken. If all be fulfilled, then peace shall be in all the world. The fulfilment of these commandments excludes evil from the life of man.

Yes, under such conditions the life of man would indeed be what every feeling heart seeks and desires. All men would be brothers, all would be at peace one with another, enjoying for the appointed term of mortal life all the good this world can give. The sword would be changed for the ploughshare, and the spear for the sickle. Then the kingdom of God would be on earth the kingdom of peace promised by all the prophets, which was drawing near in the days of John the Baptist, and which Christ proclaimed in the words of Isaiah, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor ; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19 ; Isa. lxi. 1, 2).

The commandments of peace given by Christ, simple, clear, anticipating and preventing all the chances of strife, discover to us the kingdom of God on earth. Christ then is truly the Messiah, he fulfilled what was promised in his name. It is we who have left unfulfilled what is the desire of all men's hearts, that for which we have ever prayed and continue to pray.

## VII.

WHY, then, will men leave undone what Christ has bid them to do? What can alone secure to them the highest good attainable by man, which they have always longed for and still desire? From all sides I hear but one and the same answer, though expressed in different words: "The teaching of Christ is excellent, and were it fulfilled the kingdom of heaven would indeed exist on earth, but it is too difficult to be practically realized."

Christ's rules for human conduct are divinely good, and would be a blessing to men, but they are hard for men to practise. We so often hear and repeat this, that the contradiction involved in such language escapes us.

It is agreeable to human nature to do what is good, and every system of human conduct can be occupied only with what is best for mankind. When men are shown what is best for them to do, how can they say that they wish to do it but cannot? Men wish to do what is of advantage to them, and avoid doing the contrary.

The reasoning activity of man, from the time of his creation, has been exercised in the search for what, amid the contradictions with which his individual and social life abounds, is best for his happiness.

Men began by fighting for land, for every object of their desire, and ended by dividing all between themselves and calling each share property. They find that such a state of things, though more difficult to keep up is nevertheless the best, and hold to it. As soon, then, as

men have decided what is best for them, that they do, how hard soever of accomplishment it may be. What, then, is our meaning when we say, the teaching of Christ is excellent; life so regulated is better than the life we live; but that better life is not for us, because it is so difficult?

If we are to take the word "difficult" to mean, that the immediate sacrifice of our desires to a greater good is difficult, why not say that it is difficult to plough the ground to obtain bread, to plant apple trees that we may have apples? That difficulties must be endured for the sake of a greater good, is known to every human being endowed with the smallest particle of intelligence; yet while calling Christ's teaching excellent we say that it is too difficult to be practically applied to life. Difficult it is, but its difficulty lies in this, that by obeying it we lose much that we now possess. It is as though we had never heard how much better it sometimes is to suffer and to lose, than never to face any hardship and always to satisfy our desires.

A man may be an animal and no one will reproach him for it; but no one can reasonably say that he wishes to be an animal. As soon as a man reasons he is conscious of being a reasoning being, and as such he cannot but admit the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable. Reason prescribes nothing; it throws light upon everything.

In the darkness I try to find a door, and only bruise my hands and knees. A light is brought, and at once I see the door, and I no longer need bruise myself against the wall. Can I then affirm that, seeing the door, it is



still so hard to pass through it that I must needs prefer to hurt myself?

In this astonishing conclusion—that the teaching of Christ is good and salutary, but that men are weak and bad, and while yearning for the better, tend ever to the worse, and therefore cannot attain the better—there is a palpable misunderstanding.

But the objection to the teaching of Christ, that it is good but incapable of application, is made not only by believers but also by unbelievers, by those who disbelieve or think they disbelieve the dogmas of original sin and redemption. It is made by men of science, by philosophers, and generally by men of high culture, who believing, or professing to believe, in nothing, consider themselves above all such superstitions. I saw that it was so from the beginning. I saw also, or thought I saw, that these learned men had yet another reason for denying the possibility of Christ's teaching. On looking deeper into the grounds of their denial, I convinced myself that they, too, have a false idea of life, and that this idea is founded on the same misconception as the false idea of those who believe. They disbelieve in God, in Christ, and in Adam ; but in the original false proposition, on which the whole idea is based, in the right of man to a life of ideal happiness, they believe as much and even more firmly, than do the theologians.

Science, in her alliance with philosophy, boasts herself to be the arbitress and mistress of man's intellectual development ; yet she is not truly the mistress but the servant. The study of the universe comes to her fraught with religion, and she can but work on the path shown



to her by religion. Religion unfolds the meaning of the life of man, and Science applies that meaning to the varied facts of life. If, then, Religion give a false idea of life, Science, educated in that religious view of the scheme of the universe, will on all sides apply that false idea to human life. And this is what has happened to our Christian science of philosophy.

The teaching of the Church gave as the leading principle of human life, this—that man has a right to a life of bliss, and that this bliss is attainable, not by his own efforts, but through some external cause. This view of the universe became the base of all our science and of all our philosophy.

Religion, Science, Public Opinion, all are agreed that the life we lead is bad, but all are equally against the doctrine which teaches that with our own selves it rests to make that life better.

Christ's teaching, that the improvement of man's life depends on his own efforts to follow the guidance of his reason, cannot be realized, because Adam fell, and the world is given over to evil. This is what Religion tells us.

It cannot be realized, because man's life depends on certain laws independent of his will. This is what Philosophy says.

Neither believers nor unbelievers ever ask themselves how we ought to live, and how employ the reason given to us; but they ask, Why is not our life what we imagined it to be, and when will it become what we wish?

It is as if man had actually rejected the apple of the

knowledge of good and evil, which according to tradition he ate in paradise, and, forgetting that his whole history has to do only with the decision of the conflict between his reasoning and his animal nature, should employ his reason only to discover the historical laws which account for his instincts.

The religious and philosophical teaching of all nations, with the exception of those of the Christian world, all the systems with which we are acquainted, of the Jews, of Confucius, of Buddha, of Brahma, of the Grecian sages, are all concerned with the regulation of man's life, and with rules for his conduct. The system of Confucius deals solely with the perfecting of the individual, the system of the Jews with the personal observance by the individual of God's covenants, the system of Buddha with the security of the individual against the ills of life. Socrates taught perfection in the name of reason ; the Stoics held that the perfect liberty of reason was the only foundation for a true life.

The whole intellectual activity of man could not but be, and in fact was, centred in one thing—in the working out by reason of the idea of good. Freedom of the will, say our philosophers, is an illusion ; and they are proud of the boldness of this assertion. But free-will is not a mere illusion ; it is a word which has no meaning. It was invented by theologians and writers on criminal jurisprudence ; and to refute that word is but to fight against windmills. The reason which throws light upon life, and guides our conduct, is no illusion ; it cannot be gainsaid. To follow reason in order to obtain good, has always been the doctrine of all true teachers of mankind ;

in that consists the whole teaching of Christ ; and to deny reason by the help of reason is absurd.

Christ's teaching deals with the son of man, taken in the sense of all men—deals, that is, with the aspirations to good common to all men, and with the reason, common no less to all men, which helps them to the realization of their wishes. To prove this sense of the expression "son of man" were superfluous.

If we take it in any other sense, we must hold that Christ purposely used words which did not carry the sense he intended to convey. But even if, as the Church would have it, "the Son of man" does mean the Son of God, it means also a man in the flesh, for Christ calls all men the sons of God.

That a son of man is truly a son of God stands clearly out through all the Gospels, but nowhere so clearly as in the conversation with Nicodemus. Every man, Christ there says, besides being conscious of a life born of the flesh of his father and mother, cannot but acknowledge another and a higher birth (John iii. 5, 6, 7). What a man feels in himself to be free, is that which is born in him of the Eternal One whom we call God (ver. 8). This that is born in us of God, this son of God in man, must be raised and ennobled within us that we may obtain the true life (ver. 14). The son of man is the son of God, with a like nature, but not the only son. He who raises and ennoble above all else this son of God within him, who believes that life is found in this divine element alone, such a one will not be at variance with life, for this is to have a feeling which springs from a disbelief in the light which is in us

(vers. 18-21). (This is the light of which it is said in the Gospel of John, that life is in it, the life which is the light of men.)

Christ teaches us to raise above all the Son of man, who is at once the Son of God and the directing light of our lives. He says, When you exalt or honour the Son of man, you will know that I speak nothing from myself (John xii. 49). The Jews, not understanding these words, asked, Who is the Son of man who is to be exalted (xii. 34)? Christ answered (ver. 35), "Yet a little while is the light in you.\* Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not; and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." To the question, What means this exalting of the Son of man? Christ answers, To live in the light which is within men.

The Son of man, according to Christ, means the light in which men are to walk, while they have light within them. Thus, in Luke (xi. 35), "Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness." In Matthew (vi. 23), "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Before and after Christ's coming on earth all men have taught that there is within man a divine light, the light of reason, that it alone should be followed, in it alone can good be found. This was the teaching of the Brahmins, of the Jewish prophets, of Confucius, Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, of all true sages, who,

\* In all the translations of the Church there is an intentional error in this passage, instead of the words "in you" (*ἐν ὑμῖν*), everywhere the rendering is "with you."

instead of building up philosophical theories, sought the truth for their own happiness and that of all men.\*

Yet we say that this light is of no importance to man. What *is* important, say believers, is the understanding of the substantive nature of the persons of the Trinity, what sacraments are vital, and what are not ; for the salvation of man depends, not on his own efforts, but on the Trinity, and the due observance of the sacred mysteries of religion. What is important, say unbelievers, is the understanding of the law which sets the particles of matter in endless motion through infinite space and time ; but the action of man's reason on his happiness is of no importance, because the improvement of his state belongs not to him, but to general laws which we will discover.

I feel convinced that in no long time, the history of the so-called scientific development of these later centuries will serve as an inexhaustible subject for laughter and pity to our descendants. During several ages the learned men of our small western world have been as madmen, believing that a life of eternal bliss

\* Marcus Aurelius says, "Honour that which is more powerful than anything on earth, which rules and which guides all men. Honour also that which is most powerful within thyself. The latter is like to the former, because it profits by what is within thee to guide thy life."

Epictetus says, "God sent his seed not only to my father and grandfather, but unto all those that live upon earth, especially unto those who reason, for they alone enter into relation with God through reason, and by it are made one with him."

In the book of Confucius it is written, "The law of the great science consists in developing and establishing the light of reason, which we have received from heaven." This proposition is repeated several times, and forms the foundation of the teaching of Confucius.

was theirs by right, and bringing themselves on every side to discover whence, and by what law, that life should begin for them, while totally neglecting all endeavours on their own account to make their existing life better.

Yet still more curious to the future historian will it appear, that his ancestors had a teacher, who showed them clearly and definitely what they must do to attain happiness ; but some of them explained his words to mean that he would come in the clouds and set all things in order, while others owned his words to be excellent, but impracticable, because human life was not what they desire it to be, and so, unworthy of serious study ; for the reason of man, said they, should be directed to the study of the laws of this life, and not concern itself with the welfare of humanity.

The Church says, Christ's teaching cannot be fulfilled, for our life here is but a shadow of the real life ; it cannot be good, for it is all evil. The best way to endure such a life is to despise it, and live through faith (that is, in the imagination) in a blissful and eternal life hereafter. Whereas on earth we must be content to live as we can, and pray.

Philosophy, Science, Public Opinion, all are agreed that Christ's teaching cannot be practically applied, because man's life does not depend on the light of reason, by which it might be improved, but on general laws. It is useless, then, to consider life by the light of reason, to strive to live in agreement with it. We must rather live as we can, in firm belief that, by the law of historical progress, of sociology, and by other laws,

after we have lived badly for a very long time our life will suddenly become good of itself.

There is a farm to which come many men, and in that farm is all that men can want—a house well furnished ; granaries filled with corn ; cellars and store-rooms well stocked with all kinds of stores ; in the outbuildings are agricultural instruments, tools, harness, horses, cows, sheep, all that is needed for a life of plenty. Men from all parts of the earth flock to this farm, and make use of all that they find therein, each man for himself, without thought of his neighbour, or of those who may come after him. Each thinks only of himself ; each makes haste to profit by all he sees around him. Then begins a general waste of all, a general quarrel and strife for the possession of each particular object. Milch cows, unshorn sheep are killed for their flesh ; stoves are lighted with benches and carts ; men fight for milk and for grain, spilling and spoiling far more than they can use. No one can eat a morsel in quiet. Each man snarling at his neighbour, and the weaker ever forced to yield to the stronger ; and at last all the inhabitants of that farm take their departure, exhausted, bruised, and hungry.

Then the owner sets all once more in order. Once more it is filled to overflowing, and once more there is the same crush and quarrel. All is given and taken in vain, and once more a crowd of jaded, bruised, and exasperated men come forth venting their spite on their comrades, and abusing the master of that house for having prepared so little and so ill.

Again the kind master reorganizes the farm, only



for the same scene to recur. At last arrives a teacher who says to the others, "Brothers, we do not act well! Look, how many goods there are in the farm, how well it is all arranged! There is ample for us all, and for all that come after us, if we will but live reasonably. Let us not take from each other, but rather help each other. Let us plough and sow and look after the cattle, and it will be well with all of us." Then it happened that some understood the words of the teacher, and began to act as he had said. They ceased from fighting, and from robbing each other, and began to work. But the rest, who either would not listen to the teacher, or listening would not believe, continued as formerly to quarrel among themselves and to ruin the goods of the master, and then went on their way. Others followed with the same result. Those who had listened to the words of the teacher, kept beseeching their brethren not to quarrel nor to lay waste the master's goods, assuring them that it would be better for them to hearken to the teacher's advice. But still there were many who would not listen, who would not believe, and things went on for very long in the old way. This was quite natural and comprehensible so long as men did not believe his teaching.

At last, it is said, there came a time when all on the farm heard the words of the teacher, when all understood them, and not only understood, but confessed that it was God Himself who spoke in the person of the teacher, that the latter was Himself God; and all believed, as in a holy thing, in each word that fell from the teacher's lips. But it is also said, that later on, instead of living

in harmony with the words of the teacher, all returned to their old life, and began once more to quarrel among themselves, and to say, Now we know for a certainty that thus it must be and no otherwise.

What do these things mean? Even cattle, when they have food to eat, do not snatch it from one another ; and yet men, with knowledge of a better life ordained, as they believe, by God Himself, elect for the worst, because, they say, it is not possible to live otherwise. These men must have imagined something strange. Well, what could those men on the farm have had in their minds, that, having once believed the teacher they should continue to live their old life, to despoil each other, to fight, to ruin both the master's goods and themselves ? This is what they had in their minds.

The teacher said unto them : Your life in this house is bad, live better and it will be well for you ; but they imagined that the teacher altogether condemned their life in this farm, and promised them another and a happy life, not there, but elsewhere. And so they decided that this farm was but an inn, and that it was not worth troubling themselves about their life there, so long as they were careful not to lose sight of the good life promised in another place. Only thus can be explained the strange conduct of those men, who believed that the teacher was God, and of those who accounted him wise and his words true, yet continued to live as before in direct contradiction with his teaching.

Men have heard and understood all ; but they have allowed the lesson of the teacher to pass through their ears—that men should work out their happiness them-

selves here upon earth, in the farm where they have met, instead of imagining that this farmhouse is only an inn, and that in some place elsewhere will be the real and lasting dwelling-place. This is how the astonishing conclusion has been reached, that the words of the teacher are excellent, are in very truth the words of God, but to fulfil them here is impossible.

If men would only cease to ruin themselves! Would cease expecting some one coming to help them! Whether it be Christ amid the clouds to the sound of the trumpet; or some historical law; or the law of the differentiation and integration of forces! But there can be no help, if men will not help themselves, and hardly any effort is needful. They have but to expect no miracle from heaven or earth, and to cease from self-destruction.

## VIII.

LET us suppose that Christ's teaching gives happiness to the world; let us suppose that it is reasonable, and that man on the ground of reason has no right to reject it. But what can a single individual do, amid a whole world disobeying the law of Christ? If all men were suddenly agreed to live after the law of Christ, to obey it would be possible. But one man cannot set himself against the whole world. "If I alone on earth fulfil Christ's law," people say, "I shall have to give up all that I possess, to present my cheek to the smiter without defending myself; if I, moreover, do not consent to take oaths and to fight in war, I am arrested, and if I do not

die of hunger, I am beaten to death, or I am thrown into prison or shot. So that by my obedience to this law I should destroy my happiness and ruin my whole life."

This objection is founded on the same misunderstanding as that which rejects the application of Christ's teaching to life.

This is what is generally said, and what I myself thought, until I had entirely freed myself from the influence of the teaching of the Church, through which I had failed to understand in its true meaning Christ's doctrine of human conduct.

Christ proposed his law of conduct to save men from that ruinous life which results from the rejection of his law; and you say you would be glad to follow his law, but would be sorry to ruin your life. Christ teaches us a way of safety from a ruinous life, and you regret the life which ruins you. Surely, then, you must consider your life by no means ruined, but a real and acceptable possession. In this acceptance of your earthly personal life as something real belonging to you, lies the cause of the misunderstanding of Christ's teaching. He knew man's tendency to this error, and in a series of discourses and parables shows them that they have no *right* to life, that there can be no life, until they obtain the true life, and renounce the phantom which they call by that name.

In order to understand this doctrine of the salvation of life, it is necessary first to understand what was said by the prophets, by Solomon, by Buddha, by all the wise men of the world, about the personal life of man. We

may, as Pascal expressed it, put it from our minds ; we may carry before us screens to hide from our view the abyss of death to which we are all hastening,—but it is enough to think of what the life of man, if merely solitary and personal, means, to be convinced that such a life can have for individual men no meaning at all, that it is a malicious derision of death, of man's reason, and of all that there is of good within him.

Therefore, in order to understand Christ's teaching, we must bethink ourselves well, that there may take place in us what John, the predecessor of Christ, called *μετάνοια* when he preached to men led astray like ourselves. John said, Before all things repent, that is, bethink yourselves, or you will all perish. He said, The axe is laid to the root of the tree to hew it down ; death and perdition are there beside every one. Forget not this, beware ! Christ himself at the outset of his career as preacher said also, Take heed, or else you will all perish.

In Luke (xiii. 2-5), Christ is told of the Galileans whom Pilate had slain. "And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things ? I tell you, Nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem ? I tell you, Nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Had Christ lived in our day and country, he would have said, Think ye that they who were burnt in the

circus,\* or those who have perished in railway accidents, were guiltier than others. Ye shall all likewise perish, if you do not take heed, if you do not find in your life that which cannot perish. Death through a falling tower, through a burning circus, terrifies you, but I tell you that a death as terrible and as inevitable awaits you also. In vain do you strive to forget it; and when it comes unexpectedly, it is the more terrible.

Christ says (Luke xii. 54-57), "When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

You know the signs of the weather beforehand, how is it that ye see not what is right for you? Flee from danger, guard well your lives, and still, if you fall not by Pilate's hand, a tower will crush you; and if neither Pilate nor tower injure you, you may die in your beds in still acuter sufferings.

Take the trouble to make a simple calculation, as men of the world do when they undertake any enterprise, be it to build a house, to set out for a war, or to set up works; they consider and take great pains that the enterprise may have a reasonable success.

\* This alludes to one of the wooden buildings erected for the public amusements during the Carnival and Easter Week in Russia in 1883, which caught fire, and as the doors could not be opened from the inside nearly all within perished.—ED.

In Luke (xiv. 28-31) we find, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"

Is it not, then, a senseless thing to take pains with what, for all your labour, will never be finished. Death will always come before the house of your earthly happiness is completed. And if you know beforehand, that however you may struggle against death, the victory will be to him and not to you, is it not better to cease to struggle with him, to set all your affections not on that which must of a certainty perish, but to seek that which death cannot affect?

In Luke (xii. 22-27) we read, "And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his age? If, then, ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet



I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Whatever care you may take of your body and for your food, not one of you can add an hour to his life. Is it not, then, foolish to trouble ourselves with things over which you have no power?

You know well that your life must end in death, yet none the less you busy yourselves with guaranteeing your life by the possession of property. Life cannot be guaranteed by property. Understand, that this is an idle deceit with which you deceive yourselves.

The true significance of life lies not, says Christ, in what we have or what we get, in that which is without us. It must lie in something else.

He says (Luke xii. 16-21) that the life of man consists not in the abundance of his possessions. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Death awaits us all at any and every moment. (Luke xii. 35-40): "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning: and be ye yourselves like unto men

looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast ; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready : for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

The parable of the virgins waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, of the end of time, and of the last judgment, all these passages, according to the opinion of all the commentators, besides their reference to the end of the world, are to remind us also of the nearness and the inevitableness of death.

Death is ever on the watch for you. Your life must be rounded in death. Even while you are working to lay up treasure for yourself in the future, you know that for you in the future there is only death, for you and for all that you have laboured for. Life, then, for life's sake, can have no significance. If there be a life into which reason enters, it must be other than this one ; it must be one whose aim is other than the laying up of treasure for the future. To live reasonably, is to live so that death cannot destroy life.

Christ says, in Luke (x. 41), " Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things : but one thing is needful."

All the innumerable cares with which we trouble ourselves for the future are useless ; they are a delusion

with which we mock ourselves. One thing only is needful.

From the day of his birth, inevitable ruin awaits man, a senseless life and a senseless death if he find not the one thing needful for the true life. What that one thing is Christ has told us. It is not of his own invention, nor does he promise to bestow it on us of his own divine power. He shows us only that together with the personal life, which has been proved a fallacy, there should be that which is a truth and no fallacy.

In the parable of the vineyard (Matt. xxi. 33-42) Christ explains the source of the error which hides this truth from men, imposing on them the phantom of their individual life for the true one.

Man, dwelling in a well-kept and well-filled garden, fancied himself to be the veritable owner thereof, and from that erroneous fancy has sprung a series of foolish and cruel acts, till he has been driven from the garden, and has been excluded from the true life. Even so have we imagined that this life of ours is our own personal possession, our *right* to be employed as seems best to us, without reference or obligation to others; and we, having imagined this, are inevitably led into the same foolish and cruel acts, and the same exclusion from life awaits us. As it appeared to the husbandmen in the vineyard that the more cruel they were, the more would it be to their advantage—killing the messengers and the master's son—so it appears to us.

As it was with the vine-dressers, that, as they gave to no one the fruits of the garden, they were at length driven out by the master, so will it be with those who

imagine that their personal life is the true one. Death will drive them out of life, putting other men in their place ; and this not for punishment, but merely because they do not understand what life should be. As the dwellers in the garden either forgot, or did not choose to remember, that the garden entrusted to them had been ditched in, fenced round, and provided with a well, the work of others who naturally expected from them work in return ; so men, living their personal life, have forgotten, or wish to forget, all that has been done for them before their birth, that is being done for them at every moment of their lives, and what in consequence is expected of them in return. They wish to forget that all the good things of life by which they profit have been given to them, are being daily given to them, as it were in trust for others.

This correction of man's view of life, this *μετάνοια* is the corner-stone of Christ's teaching, as he himself says at the end of the parable. As the vine-dressers living in the vineyard which they had not cultivated, were bound to understand and feel that they owed an unpaid debt to the master, so are men bound to understand and feel that from the day of their birth to the day of their death they are debtors still to those who have lived before them, to their contemporaries, or to those who are to come after them ; above all, debtors to Him who was, and is, and shall be the end of all. Men should understand, that every hour of life in which this debt remains unpaid, but confirms it the more, and that consequently a man, who lives for himself, denying the obligation which connects him with life and its origin, deprives

himself of life. They should see, that, as Christ so often reminds them, the life they lead in their anxiety to preserve it, really ensures its destruction.

True life is that, and that only, which continues past life, and promotes what is good both here and hereafter.

In order to have a part in this life, a man must renounce his own will, and fulfil that of the Father of Life, from whom the Son of man received it.

In John (viii. 35) Christ in effect says, that the bond-servant who doth according to his own will, and not after the will of his master, cannot dwell for ever in his master's house, only the son, who fulfils the will of the father abideth for ever ; and this idea he dwells upon in many places.

The will of the Father of Life is the life, not of an individual man, but of the only Son of man living in men ; and consequently man preserves his life only when he looks upon it as a pledge, as a talent given to him by the Father in trust for all men ; when he lives not for himself, but for the Son of man.

We are taught that Christ saved men when he, the second person of the Trinity, God, became incarnate, and taking upon himself the sins of Adam, and of all men, atoned for them to the first person of the Trinity, and established for our salvation his church and sacraments. Believing thus, men are saved and obtain eternal life beyond the grave. But it is impossible to deny that Christ saved, and still saves, men by this also, that, pointing out to them their inevitable ruin, in his words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he shows them the true path of life, in

exchange for that treacherous path of individual life which we formerly followed.

Though some may doubt of a life and salvation beyond the grave, grounded on the doctrine of the atonement, no one can doubt of the salvation of all men, if they be shown the inevitable ruin of personal life, and the true path of safety in the union of their will with that of the Father. Let any reasonable man ask himself, what his life and death are, and let him try to give to them any other meaning than that given by Christ.

Any idea of personal life unless founded on the renunciation of self to serve others, mankind, the Son of man, is a phantom which vanishes at the first touch of reason. That my personal life perishes, but that the life of the world after the will of the Father does not perish, and that identification with that will alone gives me the possibility of salvation, I cannot doubt.

What was I, then, to do, if I alone understood the teaching of Christ? if I, surrounded by those who neither fulfilled nor understood it, stood alone in my belief?

What was I to do? Live as all did, or live after the teaching of Christ? I understood the teaching of Christ in his commandments, and saw that the fulfilment of them gives happiness to me and to all men on earth. I understood that the fulfilment of these commandments is the will of the Universal Spirit from whom my own life also springs.

I understood also that, I should inevitably perish by a senseless life and death, with all those around me, if

I did not fulfil the will of the Father, in which alone lay the possibility of safety.

By acting as all do, I shall certainly act contrary to the general good, shall certainly act contrary to the will of the Father of Life, and as surely deprive myself of the only possibility of bettering my desperate state. By doing what Christ teaches me, I shall continue the work of men before me, contribute to the good of all men now living and to live after me, and do the will of him who called me into being, which can alone save me.

The circus is on fire, the crowd crush and suffocate each other, pressing against the door which opens from the inside. There comes one who cries, "Stand away from the door, turn back! The more you press on, the less your hope of safety. Turn back, and you will find a way out and be saved." Whether many or only one, as I have heard said, listened to the voice makes no difference. But in my case, having heard and believed, what can I do, but go back and call upon all to listen to the voice of the one that would save them? I may be suffocated, crushed to death, but nevertheless my sole chance of safety lies in finding the only issue. I cannot but go that way. A saviour must be one in truth, he must save; and the salvation of Christ is real salvation—he appeared, he spake, and the human race was saved.

The circus has been burning an hour; it is needful to haste, if we would save those inside. But the world has been burning for eighteen hundred years, ever since Christ said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth;" I will feed it till it burn, and it shall burn until men are saved.



Why are there men on earth, why does it burn, but that men may have the blessing of salvation?

Understanding this, I understood and believed that Jesus is not only the Messiah, Christ, but the Saviour of the world.

I know there is no other issue for myself, nor for those who together with me have to endure the pains of this life. I know that for them as for me, the only escape is through the fulfilment of Christ's commands which procure for all the highest conceivable bliss. Will I have more difficulties to encounter, will I die the sooner by following the teaching of Christ.

Such a prospect can only alarm one who does not perceive how absurd and empty is his isolated personal life, or who imagines that he will not die; but it does not alarm me, for I know that to live for my own individual happiness is the greatest possible folly, and that after so foolish a life, I must still die; and so, though I die as all who have not believed Christ, my life and death will have sense both for me and for all; they will have been of use for the salvation and the life of all; and it is this that Christ taught.

## IX.

WERE all men to fulfil Christ's teaching, the kingdom of God would have come on earth. If I alone fulfil it, I will have done the best for all, and for myself. There is no salvation without.

"But where can I find faith to enable me to fulfil it,

and always to follow it? I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief."

The disciples asked Christ to confirm their faith. "I desire to do well, but I do ill," says the Apostle Paul.

"It is difficult to be saved," is what is generally said and thought.

A drowning man calls for help. A rope, which alone can save him, is thrown to him, and he says, Assure me, before I lay hold of it, that this rope will save me; I believe it will, but still assist my unbelief. What does it all mean? If the man refuse to take hold of the rope, it proves he cannot understand his situation.

How can a Christian, professing to believe in the divinity of Christ and his teaching, however he understand it, say that he desires to believe, but cannot?

God Himself has visited earth, and said, Eternal suffering, fire, utter and immutable darkness, await you, and here is your salvation—believe and fulfil My teaching. A Christian cannot possibly disbelieve the offered salvation, he cannot refrain from profiting by it, he cannot say, "Help my unbelief."

For a man so to say, it is not only necessary that he should doubt his perdition, but that he should believe in his safety. Children who, having fallen overboard, are kept floating by the current, by their clothes, or by their feeble struggling, do not realize the danger they are in. A rope is thrown to such a one from the ship, he is told he will certainly perish, and he is implored to catch hold of the rope. (The parables of the woman who found the lost penny, of the shepherd who found his lost sheep, of the feast of the prodigal son, all allude to the same thing.)

But the child does not believe. He does not doubt the rope, but that he is perishing. Other light-hearted children have told him that he will continue to float happily even when the ship has disappeared. He does not believe that his clothes will be soaked, his little arms tired, and at last that he will suffocate and sink ; and therefore he pays no attention to the rope of safety.

In like manner people become persuaded that they will not perish, and so reject the teaching of the Christ-God ; continuing to say, " Uphold our belief that we are not perishing."

To do so is impossible. To be assured of their safety they must cease from doing that which causes their ruin, and begin to do what will save them ; they must take hold of the rope. But they do not wish to do so, but desire to be convinced that they *are* safe, though under their eyes their fellows perish daily. And this desire they call faith ; but it is only natural that such never suffices them, and that they always require new additions to it.

And when I understood Christ's teaching I saw that such was not faith, and that it was this, falsely so named, that the Apostle James had refuted in his epistle (ii. 14) : \* " What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man *thinks* he hath faith, but have not works ? Can that faith save him ? If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace,

\* This epistle for a long time was not accepted by the Church, and when at last it was, it underwent certain distortions ; some words are left out, some are transposed or arbitrarily translated. I have retained the authorized Russian version, correcting only some inaccuracies according to Tischendorf's manuscript.

be ye warmed and filled ; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? Even so faith if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith and I have works ; shew me thy faith apart from thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that God is one, thou doest well ; the devils also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren ? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar ? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. . . . Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith. . . . For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

James says that the only sign of faith is work, which flows from it, and that so the unproductive faith does not exist, and can neither feed others nor assist itself ; it is only a desire to believe something, a false verbal assertion that one believes in what one does not believe. According to the definition of the apostle, faith is that which originates action, and action that which completes faith, that is, what makes faith be faith.

The Jews asked Christ (Matt. xxvii. 42 ; Mark xv. 32 ; John vi. 30), "What then doest thou for a sign that we may see and believe thee ? What workest thou ?" "Let him now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe." "He saved others ; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel ; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him."

And to such demands for the enforcement of their

faith, Christ answered, that their desire was vain, and that he could not force them to believe what they would not. "If I tell you, ye will not believe" (Luke xxii. 67). "I told you, and ye believe not. . . . Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep" (John x. 25, 26).

The Jews demanded precisely what is required by Church-reared Christians—some exterior sign as an evidence to Christ's teaching; but he showed the impossibility of such, and explained that they did not believe, not for want of a sign, but because they would not follow the way of life he had shown to his sheep. And he explained further (John v. 44) who his sheep were, why some believe, and others do not, and what is the foundation of faith. How can ye believe, he said, when ye accept teaching\* (δόξα) one from another, but the teaching from the one God ye seek not? In order to believe, he said, you must seek the teaching which comes from God alone. "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory" (δόξαν τὴν ἰδίαν): "but he that seeketh the *teaching* of Him that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John vii. 18). The teaching of life, δόξα, is the foundation of faith, and all action flows spontaneously from faith, and all faith from our idea of life.

There may be an indefinite variety of action, an almost infinite number of beliefs, but there can only be two doctrines of life, one of which Christ repudiates, the other he accepts. The first—the source of all error—consists in assigning to individual life an essential

\* δόξα, as in many other places is quite erroneously translated by the word *glory*: δόξα from δοκέω means view, judgment, *doctrine*.

reality belonging to the man. It is this which has inspired the various beliefs and actions of men of the world, which has now and has had always many followers. The second—preached by all the prophets, and taught by Christ—is that our individual life only acquires a meaning in the fulfilment of the will of God.

If a man be persuaded that his individuality is of the chief importance to him, he will also believe that personal welfare is the real end of his life, and in accordance with this he will have a faith and modes of action corresponding, either for the accumulation of property, the attainment of celebrity, or the satisfaction of his passions. If a man accept the second doctrine, if he be convinced that life consists solely in accomplishing the will of God, according to the faith of Abraham and the teaching of Christ, such belief will give colour to his principles, and out of it his actions will flow.

This, then, is the reason why those who believe in an unmerged personal life cannot accept the teaching of Christ, and always, with this belief, will their deeds correspond to their faith, and not to their intentions and their words. The desire for miracle of old and at the present time must destroy simplicity of life. We may pray, attend the Holy Communion, become philanthropic, build churches, convert others, and all the while be far from following Christ, because we will not, as did Abraham, bring our only son as a sacrifice. Did Abraham doubt one moment his duty of sacrifice to the God who alone gave a meaning to his life? Did Christ and his disciples hesitate in their self-sacrifice? It is from this strange misunderstanding of the essence of

faith springs the desire of men to be persuaded into the belief that it is best to live according to Christ's teaching, whereas with all the impulse of their soul, and by all the teaching of the welfare of an individual existence, they wish to live in a way quite at variance to this teaching.

The foundation of faith lies in the meaning given to life, and from it proceeds the appreciation of importance in life ; faith is, in fact, the conception of all the phenomena of life. Those who possess a faith founded on the doctrine of personal welfare, cannot make it agree with that deduced from Christ's teaching.

The likelihood of this misconception is clearly alluded to in the Gospels. The disciples required confirmation of their faith (Matt. xx. 20-28 ; Mark x. 35-45). Here, after the denunciation of riches, occur the terrible words, to those who believe in personal welfare, denouncing all who are not ready to sacrifice even their life for the teaching of Christ. Peter asks, "What shall we receive?" and James and John covet a post of honour in the kingdom. To the first Christ replies in a parable (Matt. xx. 1-16), to the others in the solemn words, "Ye know not what ye ask." You do not understand this teaching which is based on renunciation, not on acquisition. You may drink the cup (live the life) I drink of, but I cannot seat you beside myself. It is only here that the powerful enjoy dominion ; you must know that happiness consists in service, not in being served, and he who would thus serve must give his life to be a ransom for all.

Christ did not tell his disciples to alter their conception of the good and evil in life, but he unfolded to them



the real meaning on which faith is founded, the true appreciation of good and ill. In his parable to Peter, of the workmen, Christ reveals the entire misconception of his teaching which arises from lack of faith. He says—It is only under conditions demanding personal welfare that the equivalent for work done is valued, and such valuation is founded on a presumption of the absoluteness of personal rights, which are purely visionary, man having no rights he can claim, nothing but obligations to perform. If even he sacrifice his whole life for others, he has but returned the gift of another. If a man claim a right to life, if he dispute with the Source of all, he proves then by that he has no idea of the real meaning of life.

Men, having received happiness, demand more; having waited, idle and miserable, in the market, living not at all, they are set to work by the Master's kindness, and at the same, afterwards they become discontented, because, setting to work with a false idea of life, they desire proportional rewards. They do not perceive that in work itself is the highest good, for the benefits of which they ought to return all within their power, instead of demanding a reward. And those who set about life with the same confusion of principle as possessed these workmen cannot have a right faith. The parable of the master and the workmen returning from the field makes this point still clearer.

On hearing the injunction to pardon one's brother not seven times but seventy times seven, the disciples said, struck with its difficulty, "Yes, but . . . it is necessary to believe in order to fulfil that: increase then

our faith." The request was in reality from the same weakness as had before asked a sign.

The disciples argued as do most of us : It will be well to arrange to live a life of personal welfare, and believe it will be still better for us to obey the will of God.

We all make this demand which is at variance with the whole of Christ's teaching, and are astonished to find faith difficult.

And this radical misunderstanding existed then as now, and Christ in a parable disclosed the true nature of faith, which arises not from what he said, but from the consciousness of one's own position. It is founded solely on the rational consciousness of what it is best to do, being in a certain position ; and it is impossible to excite a faith by promises of reward, or by threats of perdition, that would not collapse at the first temptation ; for the faith which can move mountains, which cannot possibly waver, is founded upon the consciousness of inevitable loss, and of the only salvation possible to one so placed—namely, a united life in accord with the will of the Master ; all who so perceive need no confirmation.

Christ says, When the master returns with his labourer from the field he does not tell him to dine, but to look after his employer, and to tend the beasts, and only when he has so done does the labourer sit to his own meal. And the man will do so without feeling that he has been unjustly treated, nor does he vaunt his self-abnegation, nor expect a reward or even thanks ; he so acts for so he ought to act, and he only does what he knows he must do, because such is the inevitable con-

dition of his service, and at the same time the true welfare of his life. So also you, says Christ, when you will have done all that was required of you (that you were bidden to do), regard yourselves as having only done what it was your duty to do. He who understands his position towards the Master, will also understand that he can live only by complying with the Master's will, and will also know in what consists his welfare, and will possess that faith for which nothing is impossible. This is just the faith that Christ teaches. Accordingly, Christ's faith is based upon the rational consciousness of the true sense of life.

The foundation of faith according to Christ's teaching is light—in the sense opposed to darkness (John i. 9-12). There was the true light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God" (John iii. 19-21).

For him who has understood the teaching of Christ, there can be no question as to the confirmation of his faith. Faith, according to Christ's teaching, is founded

upon the light—truth. Christ nowhere calls for faith in himself; he calls only for faith in the truth.

He says to the Jews (John viii. 40), "Ye seek to kill me, a man who hath told you the truth, which I heard from God."

"Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" (ver. 46). He says, (John xviii. 37), "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

He says (John xiv. 6), "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

In the same chapter he says to his disciples, "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you" (vers. 16, 17).

He says that all his teaching is, that he himself is truth.

The subject of Christ's teaching is truth. Faith, therefore, in him is not confidence in everything concerning Jesus, but it is the knowledge of truth. It is useless to endeavour to persuade a man into the truth of his teaching, or to buy him over to obey it by the promise of rewards. Whoever understands it will have faith in him, because it is truth. Whoever knows the truth necessary for his own good, cannot but believe in it, as the drowning man, once aware of his danger, cannot but lay hold of the rope that is thrown to save him.

The question, therefore, What shall we do that we may believe? is one that proves only our misunderstanding of the teaching of Christ.

We say that it is difficult to live after Christ's teaching. How should it not be so, when through all our life we industriously hide from ourselves our real position, striving only to confirm our belief in that position being other than it is. We exalt this confidence, re-christened faith, into something sacred, and by every means—by violence, by persuasion, by threats, flattery, and deceit, we allure men to accept it.

In this demand for belief in the impossible and unreasonable, we go so far that the very unreasonableness of what we ask to be believed is taken as a sign of its truth. It was a Christian who said *credo quia absurdum*, and others with rapture repeat it, supposing that to demand a belief in the impossible is the best means of insuring truth.

Not long since a certain clever and learned man told me in conversation that the Christian teaching, as giving a moral view of life, was of small importance. "All that is in it," said he, "can be found among the Stoics, the Brahmins, and in the Talmud. The substance of Christianity is not in that, but in the theosophical teaching contained in its dogmas." This means, that what is dear in Christianity, is not what is eternal and common to all humanity, not what is required for life and is reasonable, but what cannot be understood and is useless; that, in the name of which have been slaughtered millions of men.

We have formed our false view of life and of the

world, from our own evil passions and corrupt desires ; and belief in this false view, externally connected with the teaching of Christ, we account the most necessary and important object in life. Were it not for this age-long trust in a lie, the teaching of Christ would long ago have triumphed.

It is perhaps a terrible thing to say, yet it seems so to me, that were it not for the Church's commentaries on this teaching, those who are now called Christians would be much nearer to Christ ; they would be much nearer to a reasonable conception of the good in life than they are now. The moral teaching of all the prophets of mankind would not be closed for them ; they would have their own lesser teachers of truth, and would believe in them. But now that the whole truth has been unfolded, it has seemed so terrible to those whose deeds are evil, that they have perverted it into a lie, and all confidence in the real truth has been lost. In our European society to the testimony of Christ, that he came upon earth to bear witness of the truth, and that all who are of the truth must listen to him, we have long since answered in the words of Pilate—"What is truth?"

These words, which really sound so sad and deep an irony against the Roman who spoke them, we have taken seriously and made a faith of. We all on earth live not only without truth, but in the firm conviction that of all vain pursuits the vainest is that search for truth which is to determine our knowledge of the meaning of the life of man.

The doctrine which regulates life, which among all

nations, up to the times of our European society, was always accounted the most important, alluding to which Christ said that it was the "one thing necessary," is itself excluded from our life, from all influence over man's acts. It is relegated to a special institution called the Church, and even those who officiate therein have long ceased to believe in it.

The only window through which light can come, to which the eyes of all thinking and suffering men are turned, is shut. To the question, "What am I? What am I to do? Cannot you show me a way, through the teaching of that God, who, you say, came to save us, to lighten my life of its burdens?" the only answer I receive is: "Fulfil the commands of those in authority over you, and believe in the Church!" "But why is our life on earth so bad?" exclaims a despairing voice. "Why is there all this evil? Must I through life take part in it? Cannot it be lightened?" The answer is, "It is impossible. Your wish to live well and to help others to do so is pride; though a beautiful thought, it is vain. The only thing it can save for you is your soul in the next world. If you do not wish to take part in the evil of this world, go out of it."

This way is open to all, says the Church; but know also that, if you choose that path, you cannot take part in the life of the world, you must cease to live, and slowly kill yourself.

There are only two paths, say our teachers: to believe in and obey those in authority, and to take part in the evils which we institute, or to leave the world and go into a monastery, to abstain from sleep and food and to stand



on a pillar to mortify your flesh, to bow down again and again, and to do nothing at all for your fellow-men. If you will not do this, you must confess that Christ's teaching cannot be fulfilled, and accept the lawlessness of life as consecrated by religion, or else renounce life, which is equivalent to a slowly worked-out suicide.

Strange as must seem, to one who understands Christ's teaching, the error that, though good for men, it is impracticable ; the other error, that a man, who really wishes, not in words, but in deed, to fulfil his teaching, must retire from the world, is still more strange.

The error, that it is better for a man to withdraw from the world than to expose himself to its temptations, is an old one, long known to the Hebrews, but altogether foreign, not only to the spirit of Christianity, but even to Judaism. Against this error, long before the time of Christ, the story of the prophet Jonah was written, a story so often and lovingly quoted by him.

The interpretation of that story is as follows.

Jonah, a prophet, desires to be the only righteous one, and is astonished at the depravity of men. God shows him that because he is a prophet he is wanted to show to erring men his knowledge of the truth, and that, so far from flying from them for their sins, he should live among them, to purge them of those sins, all the more if they be erring. Jonah despises the depraved Ninevites, and flees from them, but God brings him, by means of the whale, back again to them, and then he fulfils the command of God ; through him the Ninevites accept the teaching of God, and their life is bettered.

But Jonah rejoices not to be the instrument of the divine will; he is vexed, and jealous of the Ninevites—he wishes alone to be good and wise. He retires into the desert, bewailing his lot, and reproaching God. Then in one night a gourd grows over him for a shelter from the sun, but in the next a worm destroys the gourd, and Jonah still more bitterly reproaches God, that the gourd, so useful to him, has perished. Then God says, “Thou art sorry for the gourd, which thou callest thine own, in one night it grew and in one night it perished; shall not I have pity on a whole people, which was perishing, living like the beasts, unable to tell the right hand from the left? Thy knowledge of the truth was only wanted for thee to give to those who had it not.”

Christ often quoted this story, but it is moreover recorded in the Gospels how he himself, after visiting John the Baptist in the wilderness, before beginning to preach, was subject to the same temptation. He was led by the devil (deceit) into the wilderness to be tempted, but, defeating the spirit of deceit by the strength of his soul, went afterwards into Galilee, and from that time forth, shrinking not from the most depraved of men, he lived among Publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, teaching them the truth.\*

\* Luke iv. 1, 2: Christ was led by the spirit of deceit into the wilderness to be tempted. Matt. iv. 3, 4; The spirit of deceit said to Christ, that he was not the Son of God, if he could not of stones make bread. Christ answered, I can live without bread, I live by that which God breathed into me. Then the spirit of deceit said, If so, then throw thyself from the height; thou wilt kill thy flesh, but the spirit breathed into thee by God shall not perish. Christ answered, My life in the flesh is the will of God. To kill the flesh is to go against the will of God, is to tempt God.

According to the teaching of the Church, Christ, God in man, gave us an example of life. He passed the most of his days, so far as they are known to us, in the very whirl of life, among publicans and loose women, and in Jerusalem among the Pharisees. His chief commandments are, to love one's neighbour, and to spread the teaching of truth among men, both of which require constant intercourse with the world. And yet we seem therefrom to have drawn this conclusion, that Christ teaches us to retire from the world, to have nothing to do with man. In a word, that we may follow the example of Christ, we are taught the exact reverse of all he taught and all he did.

According to the interpreters of the Church, Christ's teaching offers, as well to those who live in the world as to those who have chosen a monastic life, no doctrine of life—no means of bettering it for themselves and others—but the belief of the men of this world, that, living ill, we may still be saved in the world to come; while to those who have chosen a life apart it is further ordained, that they should make life here still worse than it is.

This, however, is not as Christ taught.

He taught truth; and if there be an abstract truth, it is not less the truth when practically applied. If life in God be the only true life, the only one that brings happiness with it, it is not less true or less happy here

Matt. iv. 8-11: Then the spirit of deceit said, If so, then serve the flesh, as well as men do, and the flesh will reward thee. Christ answered, I am powerless over the flesh; my life is in the spirit; but to destroy the flesh I cannot, because the spirit is lodged in it by the will of God, and because, living in the flesh, I can only serve my father, God. Then Christ went out of the wilderness into the world.

on earth amid all the changes and chances of the world. If our life here did not confirm Christ's doctrine of life, his teaching would not be true.

Christ does not invite men to leave the better for the worse, but the worse for the better. He pities men, who seem to him a flock of wandering sheep, perishing without a shepherd ; and he promises them a shepherd and good pasture. He owns that his disciples will be persecuted for the sake of his teaching, and that they must have patience and bear the persecutions of the world with firmness. But he does not say that, by following his teaching, they will suffer more than by following the teaching of the world ; on the contrary, he foretells misery for the latter, but for those who follow him eternal happiness.

He does not teach salvation through faith or asceticism, that is, through a deceit of the imagination, or through voluntary torments in this life ; but he teaches a life, through which, besides salvation from the ruin of personal life, we shall have here on earth less suffering and more happiness than when living for self alone.

He tells men that, if they fulfil his teaching even in the midst of those who neglect it, they will not on that account be more unhappy, but, on the contrary, happier than before. He says it is a sure calculation of worldly wisdom to take no care for the things of this world.

In Mark (x. 28-31) we read : " Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or

father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

(Matt. xix. 27; Luke v. 11; xviii. 28.)

Christ, it is true, warns those who listen to him of the persecution they must expect from those who reject him; but he does not say that they will be losers thereby. On the contrary, he promises them more happiness here on earth than will fall to the lot of those who disregard him.

Of this there can be no doubt, both from the clearness of Christ's language and from the whole spirit of his teaching; from his own life, and the life of his disciples. But, is it true?

Considering the relative position of the followers of Christ and the followers of the world from an abstract point of view, it is impossible not to see that the position of the former must be the better one, were it only that they, doing good to every man, do not provoke the hatred of mankind against them. The followers of Christ, doing evil to none, can be hateful only to evil men. The followers of the world should be hateful to all, for the law of their life is strife—the persecution of one another. The probabilities of suffering are the same for both, but with this difference, that the followers of Christ will be prepared for it, while the followers of the world will bend the whole strength of their minds to find a way of escape from it; that the former will know that their sufferings are necessary for the world's sake, while

the latter will know not why they suffer. Considering the question, then, in this wise, the position of Christ's followers should be preferable to that of the followers of the world. But, is it so in reality?

In order to verify this point, let any one recall the difficult moments of his life, his bodily and mental sufferings, and then ask himself in whose name he has borne all these misfortunes; in the name of the world or of Christ? Let any sincere man review the whole current of his life, and he will see that no suffering came from fulfilling the teaching of Christ; that the greater part of the misfortunes of his life proceeded from his having been led away by the entanglements of the world into opposition to his own impulses.

In the course of a happy and fortunate life, using the words in their strictly worldly meaning, I have had to bear as many sufferings, brought upon me by the teaching of the world, as ever fell to the lot of a martyr for the name of Christ. All the hardest moments of my life, from drunkenness and looseness as a student, to duels, war, ill-health, and the unnatural and tormenting conditions under which I now live, all these form a martyrdom in the name of the teaching of the world.

Be it remembered that I am speaking of a life exceptionally fortunate in the common sense of the word; but how many martyrs have suffered, and are now suffering, through the teaching of the world, what I cannot even vividly realize?

We do not see the difficulties and dangers of fulfilling the teaching of the world, because we consider all that it brings upon us inevitable.

We are convinced that all the misfortunes, of which we are ourselves the cause, are necessary conditions of our life, and in that lies the very reason of our being unable to understand that Christ's teaching opens to us a way of escape from our misfortunes into a life of happiness.

In order to be able to decide the question of the relative happiness of the two lives, we must, at least for the sake of the argument, get rid of this false conception, and with an unbiassed mind survey ourselves and all that goes on around us.

Mingle with a crowd, especially a town crowd ; look into those harassed, agitated, sickly faces, and then recall your own life and that of those whom you have known intimately. Remember the violent deaths, the cases of suicide of which you have heard, and then ask yourself the cause of all those miseries, and of that despair which ends in self-murder. You will see, terrible as it seems, that nine-tenths of human sufferings spring from the teaching of the world ; that all these sufferings are really needless, and yet unavoidable, and that the majority of men are the martyrs of worldly teaching.

On a wet Sunday in last autumn I drove in a tram through the market of the Souharoff tower. For half a mile the carriage made its way through a compact crowd which divided to let it pass. From morning to evening these thousands of people, the majority of whom are hungry and in rags, jostle each other in the mud, abusing, cheating, hating each other ; and it is the same in all the markets of Moscow. These people pass the evening in public-houses, and houses of entertainments, the night in



their corners and kennels, and yet this is the best day of their week ! On the Monday in their pestiferous holes they again set about their toilsome work.

Think on the life of these people ; of the position they have left for the one they have made for themselves. Think of the unceasing labour they all, men and women alike, voluntarily endure, and you will see then that they are truly martyrs.

They have left their houses, and fields, and flocks, many even their wives and children ; they have renounced all, even their own lives, and have come to the town to gain what the world considers necessary. And all, not to speak of the tens of thousands of unfortunate ones who kill themselves with the vile fare of the night lodging-houses, all, from the factory hands, cabmen, seamstresses, and prostitutes, to the rich merchants, the ministers, and their wives, lead a hard and unnatural life ; and yet not one has achieved what the world deems needful.

Seek among these people, from the beggar to the rich man, to find him who has earned what the world thinks necessary, and you will find barely one out of a thousand. Each struggles with all his strength to obtain what he does not want, but what the world requires of him, and what he in consequence believes himself to be miserable without. No sooner has he won it, than he is called upon to obtain more, and still more ; and so on and ever on without end progresses that labour of Sisyphus, ruining the lives of men.

Take the scale of income, from those who spend three hundred roubles a year up to those who spend

fifty thousand, and how seldom will you find a man who is not jaded and worn out with working for four hundred, when he has three, for five hundred, when he has four, and so on without end. There is not one with an income of five hundred who would voluntarily change places with another who has four. If there are some who do this, they do it only for the chance of making money more quietly and surely. All want more and more to make the best of their labour, and then to give this best, their life, their soul, without reserve to the world. He who has to-day a coat and boots, will to-morrow want a watch and chain, the next day apartments with sofas and lamps; next, carpets in the drawing-room and fine clothes; afterwards a house, horses, pictures in gilt frames, till finally he falls ill from overwork, and death ends the struggle. Another takes his place, and gives his labour and his life to the same Moloch, till he, too, dies in ignorance of all he has been working for. Can such a life be truly a happy one?

Grant him all that men call happiness, and yet, how wretched is his life. Indeed, what are the conditions of earthly happiness which cannot be disputed?

One of the first and most generally acknowledged conditions of happiness is a life which does not break the link between man and nature, a life in the open air, and in the light of the sun. It involves an intimate connection with the earth, with its plants and animals. To be debarred from such a life has been considered at all times and among all men a great misfortune. Prisoners feel this deprivation more acutely than any other men.

Yet look at the life of worldly men. The greater their success, the farther are they from these conditions of happiness ; the greater their worldly happiness, the less they see of the sun, of the fields, and the woods, and the animals that dwell therein. Many of them, and especially the women, live to old age without having more than once or twice, perhaps, seen the rising of the sun, without having ever seen the fields and the woods, save from a carriage or a train, and without having themselves either sown or planted anything, or fed, or reared any domestic beast.

Such people see only stuffs and stones and wood wrought upon by human labour, and those they see not by the light of the sun, but by an artificial light ; they hear only the sound of carriages, machines, cannons, and musical instruments ; and underfoot or in their hands they have nought but the products of handicraft, they smell only the fumes of wine and tobacco-smoke ; and they eat for the most part, through the weakness of their digestion, what is not fresh but tainted. Their constant journeys from place to place do not save them from this deprivation, and they travel shut up in boxes. In the country and abroad, wherever they go, the same stuffs and wood are beneath their feet, the same curtains hide from them the light of the sun, the same lackeys and coachmen do not allow them to touch the ground, the plants, or the animals. Wherever they are, they are deprived, as though they were prisoners, of this condition of happiness. And as prisoners console themselves with the blades of grass in the court of their prison, with spiders, and with mice, so do these people console themselves

with consumptive house-plants, parrots, dogs, and monkeys, on which, however, they still bestow no care themselves.

Another indisputable condition of happiness is labour ; freely chosen and liked, the physical labour nourishing a good appetite and sound, restorative sleep. Again, the greater the good fortune which people have had in this world, the more do they lack this other condition of happiness.

All the fortunate ones of the world, the dignitaries and the rich, either, like imprisoned criminals, are altogether deprived of labour, and have to contend in vain with illness caused by the want of physical exertion, and still less successfully with *ennui* (I say unsuccessfully, because labour is only sweet when it is useful and needed, and these people want for nothing), or they have to put up with work distasteful to themselves—bankers, for instance, lawyers, governors of towns, or ministers—while their wives decorate saloons, by rich services of plate, and dress out more richly still themselves and their children. I say their work is distasteful to such men, for who yet met among them one who took pride in his work, or performed it with the same zest with which the doorkeeper sweeps away the snow from before the house? These fortunate ones, then, are either altogether shut out from labour, or are set to work at what they dislike ; they are, in short, in the condition of men condemned to penal servitude.

A third condition of happiness is a family. Here, again, the greater the worldly success the less is this happiness possible. Most adulterers designedly reject

the joys of family life, and think only of its inconveniences. Even when these people are not guilty of adultery, children are not a joy to them, but a burden, and in order to avoid having them they sometimes employ criminal means. And when they have children, they rarely have the pleasure of their society. According to the laws of their life, they must give them over to the care of others, mostly entire strangers; at first to foreigners, and afterwards to public educational establishments. To such parents what does a family bring but the grief of having children who from infancy are as unhappy as themselves, and who have only one feeling towards them, a desire for their death in order to inherit from them.

The justification of this mode of life often heard from parents is sufficiently astounding. "I am in want of nothing," says the parent, "though my life is a hard one; but I love my children, and live for them." That is to say, I know for a certainty by experiences that our life is unhappy, and therefore I educate my children to be as unhappy as I am. With that aim I bring them to the place where physical and moral infection is concentrated—to a town—give them over into the hands of strangers, who in their education have only interested motives, and thus corrupt my children physically, morally, and intellectually. And this is the argument which justifies the unreasonable life of the parents themselves! They are not prisoners, but their family life entails on them more suffering than the absence of it inflicts on the imprisoned.

A fourth condition is a free and living intercourse

with all the various classes of mankind. Here again, the higher people have risen in the world, the more must they miss this important condition of happiness. The higher the position of men, the narrower and more limited is the range of their intercourse, the lower, in their intellectual and moral development, are the few who form that charmed circle out of which there is no issue.

To the peasant and his wife the whole world lies open, and if there be a million of men who will not associate with him, he has eighty other millions left of the labouring classes, with whom, from Archangel to Astrachan, without waiting for a visit or an introduction, he can enter at once into the most intimate brotherly relations.

As for the government official and his wife, there are hundreds who are his equals, but the higher class will not receive him, and the lower are cut off from him. For the rich man of the world there are worldly families enough, but from the rest he is wholly separated. For the minister and the man of great wealth there is a tenth part of society, as important or wealthy as themselves. For emperors and kings the circle becomes smaller still. Is not this truly imprisonment, with the possibility for the prisoner of intercourse with only two or three of his jailors?

There is also a fifth condition of happiness, and that is health and a natural and painless death. Here once more, the higher a man's social position, the less chance he has of these blessings. Compare a man in easy circumstances with the average peasant, and notwithstand-

ing the hunger and excessive toil the latter must endure (not through his own fault but through the cruelty of his superiors), you will see that the lower, the healthier, the higher, the more sickly, is true both of men and women.

Thus is one life after another cast beneath the wheels of the chariot of this fatal god, that crushes out these lives, and yet new victims, with groans and sobs and curses, throw themselves ever beneath it.

To fulfil the teaching of Christ is difficult. Christ says, Who wishes to follow me must leave house, and fields, and brothers for me, his God, and he shall receive in this world an hundredfold more houses, and fields, and brothers, and moreover life eternal. But no one follows him. The teaching of the world says, Leave house, and fields, and brothers, leave the village for the unhealthy town, pass your life naked in a bathroom, lathering the backs of strangers ; or as a petty tradesman counting coppers in a cellar ; or as a public prosecutor in trials, or immersed in papers, and occupied in making the lives of those already unhappy still worse ; or as a minister always signing in haste useless documents ; or as a captain always bent on killing others—live this unnatural life, that must end in a painful death, and you shall receive nothing either in this world or in the world to come. And this call all obey.

Christ says, Take up thy cross and follow me ; that is, bear patiently the lot awarded thee, and obey me thy God ; yet none obey.

But the first worthless man, fitted for nothing but murder, who wears epaulettes and takes it into his head



to say—take not up a cross, but a knapsack and a gun, and follow me to inflict and undergo misery and certain death, is listened to, and obeyed by all.

Abandoning family, parents, wives, and children, dressed like buffoons, and obeying the will of the first man of higher rank they meet, starving, worn out by long marches, they follow they know not where, like a herd of cattle to the slaughter-house. But they are not cattle, they are men. They cannot but know whither they are driven. With the unanswered question of "Why?" on their lips, with despair in their hearts, they march to die from cold, and hunger, and disease, from the fire of bullets and cannon balls. They slay and are slain; yet not one of them knows why or wherefore this is so. The Turk roasts them alive, flays them, disembowels them; but the next day again at the call of the trumpet, the survivors march with their eyes open to suffering and death. Yet no one finds any difficulty in obeying such commands. Not only the sufferers themselves, but their fathers and mothers see no difficulty; nay, they even urge their children to obedience. It seems to them, that obedience to such commands not only is and must be expedient, but a wise and moral law.

We might believe that the teaching of Christ is difficult, terrible, and leads to suffering, were the consequences of the teaching of the world, easy, and safe, and agreeable. But in reality the teaching of the world is more difficult to fulfil, more dangerous, more fraught with suffering than that of Christ.

There were, it is said, at one time Christian martyrs, but they were exceptions; it has been calculated that

their number has reached 380,000 during eighteen hundred years. But if we count the martyrs to the world, for every single martyr to Christ we shall find a thousand martyrs of the world, whose sufferings have been a hundredfold greater. By death in war alone during the present century have fallen thirty millions of men !

These men were all martyrs to the teaching of the world. Putting the teaching of Christ aside, had they but forborne to follow that of the world, what sufferings and death would they have escaped.

If a man follows his own inclinations in refusing the life of a soldier, he will be sent to dig ditches, which is at least better than being done to death at Sebastopol or Plevna. He has only to deny that doctrine which teaches him that he must wear fine clothes and a gold chain, and have a useless drawing-room ; he has only to satisfy himself that he need not commit all the follies required of him by the world, and he will never know overwork and suffering, he will never know those eternal cares, that labour without rest or object ; he will never be debarred from intercourse with nature, from the work he delights in, from his family, and from health ; and finally he will not die a senseless and painful death.

Christ never taught men that martyrdom in his name was necessary. But he did teach them to cease from tormenting themselves, in the name of the false teaching of the world.

The teaching of Christ has a deep metaphysical meaning ; it has a universal meaning, in the sense that it is applicable to all humanity ; it has also a simple, clear, practical meaning for the life of every individual man.

This meaning may be expressed thus : Christ teaches men that they need not and should not act foolishly. This is the simple meaning, which all can understand, of the teaching of Christ.

He tells us to avoid anger, to despise no man ; to do so is foolish, and the fools will suffer. He also tells us not to spend our time after many women, but to keep faithful to one ; not to bind ourselves by promises to any one, for to keep them we may be obliged to commit foolish or even evil actions. He tells us not to render evil for evil, or the evil will return upon ourselves two-fold, like the log of wood suspended over the honey by which the bear is killed. He tells us not to call people strangers, merely because they live in another country than ours and speak another language ; with the same eyes that we look on them with, will they see us. Shun these follies, says Christ, it will be well with you.

"Yes," men reply, "but the world is so constituted, that to go against its institutions is to suffer more hardships than are incurred by accepting them. Let a man refuse to enter the army, and he will be sent to prison, possibly even shot. Let a man not provide for the support of himself and his family, and he and they will die of hunger." Thus men argue, striving to defend the institutions of the world, against the dictate of their heart. They argue thus only because they cannot deny the truth of Christ's teaching ; they profess to believe in him, and they must therefore somehow prove that they fulfil his teaching. As a matter of fact they have never really thought over the matter at all. They believe in the world's teaching, and they make use of an excuse

taught them by the Church, that to fulfil the teaching of Christ entails much suffering, never even to try to fulfil it.

We see countless sufferings which men endure through following the teaching of the world, but suffering for the sake of Christ's teaching in our day we never see. Thirty millions have perished for the world's sake in war, and thousands of millions after a life of torment have fallen by other deaths ; but I know of no millions, nor thousands, nor tens, who have perished for the teaching of Christ, no, nor even of a single man who would endure hunger or cold for his sake. It is only a laughable excuse, proving our stupendous ignorance of his teaching. It is not only that we do not believe, we have never even treated the belief seriously. The interpretation of the Church has made it, not a doctrine of life to us, but a bugbear.

Christ invites all men to drink of a spring which is there at hand beside them. Faint with thirst, they drink the blood of one another, while their teachers tell them they will perish if they drink at the spring to which Christ invites them. And men believe, enduring torments of thirst, even death itself, within a few paces of the water they dare not approach. But we have only to believe Christ, to believe that he brought good upon earth, to believe in the fresh water he shows us to quench our thirst ; we have only to come to him, to see how crafty is the deceit of the Church, and how senseless our sufferings when our salvation is so near. We have only to accept his teaching and that terrible deception in which we each and all live will stand out clearly before us.

Generation after generation have we struggled to maintain ourselves by violence, and by assuring the security of our property. The happiness of our life has lain in the amount of authority and of property we possess. We are so accustomed to this, that Christ's doctrine as to the part which power and property have in man's happiness, namely, that a rich man cannot be happy, appears to us only a demand for victims in the name of future bliss.

Yet he calls us to no sacrifice ; on the contrary, he offers us not the worse but the better part of life. Loving all men, he teaches them to refrain from maintaining themselves by violence, and from the mere heaping up of riches, even as men teach men to refrain from brawls and drunkenness. He tells men that, living without violence and without property, they will be happier than they are now, and by the example of his life confirms his words. He tells them that, living after his teaching, they must be prepared to die at any moment by violence or cold or hunger, and must not calculate on a single hour of life.

And this seems to us a terrible demand for victims, yet it is only a confirmation of the conditions under which every one of us inevitably lives. The disciple of Christ should be prepared at every instant for suffering and death ; but is not the disciple of the world exactly in the same position ? We are so accustomed to our self-deceit, that all that we do under the pretence of provision for our needs, our troops and fortresses, our stores, our dress, our medical treatment, our goods, our money, all seem to us things which really and truly are a security

for our lives. We forget what happened to him who thought to build himself granaries to lay up provisions in for his life, and who died the same night. Truly, all that we do to secure to ourselves prosperity, is exactly what the ostrich does, who hides his head, that he may not see his death. Nay, we do worse than the ostrich ; for in order doubtfully to assure our lives in a doubtful future, we certainly spoil them in what might be a certain present.

The deceit consists in a false persuasion that our lives may be secured by strife with other men. We are so accustomed to this false view, that we do not see how much we lose through it ; we do not see that we lose all, even life itself. Devoting our whole life to make preparation for its security, we have no leisure to profit by life itself.

It is worth while for a moment to get rid of this deception, and to regard our life from the outside, as an impartial spectator. How clearly, then, we see that all we do to attain this pretended security does not really effect its object, but leads us to forget that our life is never secure and cannot be. But it is not enough that we deceive ourselves, and ruin our actual life for an imaginary one, in this impulse we oftenest of all ruin the very thing which we wish to preserve. The French, in 1870, rose in arms to protect their existence, and hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen perished in consequence ; this is the case with every nation that takes up arms. The rich man secures his life with money ; and it is the money that attracts the robber who kills him. The hypochondriac thinks to secure his life by medical treat-

ment, and the very treatment slowly kills him, or at least deprives him of all real life, as in the case of the man who lay thirty-eight useless years at the pool of Siloam.

Christ, who teaches us that life cannot be made secure, and that we must be ready for death at any moment, is surely a safer guide than the world which bids us secure life as the capital necessity of existence. In both doctrines the certainty of death and the insecurity of life remain the same ; but, according to Christ, life itself, not being spent in the vain occupation of obtaining a fancied security, is free to be devoted to its one natural aim, the good of ourselves and of all men.

The follower of Christ will be poor. Yes, but that means that he will always profit by the good things which God has given him ; he will not ruin his life. The word poverty with men includes misery, but in reality need not do so.

The country labourer is poor, and therefore lives, not in the town, but in the country ; he does not sit idle at home, but works in the forest or in the fields ; he sees the light of the sun, the earth, the sky, the animals ; he does not trouble himself how to provoke his appetite, or how he may help his digestion. Three times each day will he be hungry ; he will sleep with no thought of soft cushions, or fear of wakeful nights. His children will live with him, he will have free intercourse with all men, and, first happiness of all, he will do nothing that he does not wish to do, will not be afraid of the future. He will be ill, and suffer and die, as all men do, but his death, experience shows us, will be easier than the death



of the rich man, as his life will assuredly be more happy. So Christ taught we must be to enter into the kingdom of God, and such must we be to be happy here on earth.

“But no one will give you food, and you will die of hunger,” is the objection; and this objection Christ answers in a short sentence (the same that is explained to justify the sloth of the clergy). In Matt. x. 10 and in Luke ix. 3, he said, “Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff; for the labourer is worthy of his food.” In the house which you enter eat and drink what is offered you, for the labourer is worthy of reward for his labour.

The labourer is worthy, means, literally, may and ought to have sustenance. This is a short sentence, but he who understands it as Christ meant him to understand it will never argue that a poor man must die of hunger.

Now to understand the real meaning we must first get completely rid of the idea, so familiar to us, that the happiness of man lies in idleness. We must go back to the idea, natural to all uncorrupted men, that a necessary condition of happiness is, not idleness, but work; that a man cannot cease to work, for it is as wearisome and difficult to him as to an ant, to a bird, and to every wild animal. We must forget the superstition that the position of a government official, or a landowner, or of one who has money in the funds on which he may live in idleness, is a natural and happy one. We must go back to the primitive view of labour, the view of Christ, that the labourer is worthy of his food. To Christ it

seemed impossible that men should look upon labour as a curse; he could not conceive a man not working or not wishing to work. He always takes it for granted that his followers will work. Therefore he says, If a man work, his work will give him food. If the work of one man be hired by another, then he who hires will feed him who works, in order to profit by his work. Therefore he who labours will always have food. Property he will not have, but for his existence he need have no fear.

The capital difference on this point between the teaching of Christ and that of the world is this,—the latter considers labour a special merit in a man, giving him a claim on others, and enabling him to assert his right to a larger sustenance in proportion to the amount of his labour; while the former considers it a necessary condition of the life of man, and sustenance an inevitable consequence of it. Labour provides food, food provides labour—in a never-ending circle: each in turn the consequence and cause of the other. However bad the master be, he will feed his labourer, as he will do the horse that works for him; will feed him so that he may work as long as possible, that is, he will contribute towards the attainment of the greatest good for the man.

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Christ teaches that every man, whatever the world may be, will have a better life if he understand his vocation not to demand labour from others, but to devote his life to working for others, to give his life as a ransom for

many. A man who acts thus, says Christ, is worthy of his food ; that is, he cannot fail to obtain it.

By the words which mean, a man does not live to be worked for, but himself to work for others, Christ asserts a principle which undoubtedly secures the material existence of man, and by the words, a labourer is worthy of his food, Christ sets aside the customary objection to his teaching that a man fulfilling it alone in the midst of those who do not will perish of hunger and cold. He shows that a man secures his means of livelihood, not by wresting it from others, but by making himself useful and necessary to others. The more necessary he is to others, the more certain will he be of his own livelihood.

Even in the present state of the world, those who do not follow the law of Christ, but yet labour for the good of their fellow-men, though they have no property, do not die of hunger. How, then, can the common objection to the teaching of Christ stand? No man can die of hunger while a rich man has bread. In Russia, there are now and always millions of men, who live without any personal property, solely by the work of their hands.

Among the heathen a Christian's certainty of provision for his needs will be as great as among Christians. He labours for others ; consequently he is necessary to them, and will be cared for. A dog that is useful is fed and taken care of : who, then, would not take care of a man who is needed by all?

"But a sick man, a man with a family, with children, he is not wanted, and cannot work. Men will cease to feed him," say those who desire to prove that the world's teaching is right. So they say, but in reality their

actions dispute their words, for, not admitting the practicability of Christ's teaching, they however act according to it. They do not cease to feed sheep, or oxen, or dogs, when they are ill; they will not even have an old horse put to death, but give it work according to its strength; they rear the young of animals that when grown they may gain a profit from them; how, then, will they not take care of a man when he is ill? how not find work suited to the strength of the old and the young, and how not bring up those who will labour for them?

Nine-tenths of men, the lower classes, are supported by the other tenth, the rich and powerful class, as working cattle are. But, however gross be the error in which that tenth lives, however it may despise the rest of mankind, it will never use its power to take from them the means of subsistence, it will never take away the means of life from the class whose labour it needs. This one-tenth has of late worked openly and avowedly to the end that the other nine should be decently maintained; so that they should be able to furnish the greatest possible amount of labour, and should multiply and bring up new labourers. The ants even multiply and bring up their milch cows; how, then, shall men not do the same, and cause those who work for them to increase? Labourers are needed, and those who profit by labour will always take care of those by whom the profit comes.

The objection to the practicability of Christ's teaching that, if I do not acquire something for myself, and keep what I have acquired, no one will support my

family, is true only with respect to slothful, useless, and therefore pernicious men, such as are the majority of our richer classes. Idle people no one will maintain, for they are necessary to no one, not even to themselves; but him who labours even the evil-minded will care for and support. Men rear calves, and man himself is a working animal, more useful than an ox, as the price paid for him in the slave market clearly shows. Thus children need never remain without some calling in life.

A man does not live to be worked for, but to work for others. He who will labour need never fear want.

This is a truth which the life of the whole world confirms.

In all times and countries the working man has earned a livelihood, as a horse earns his fodder, but he has taken it grudgingly, longing only the while for this one thing—to be free from the necessity of labour, to heap up all the money he could, and to sit on the neck of him who at some time has sat on his. A labourer, even of this unwilling kind, finds means of sustenance, and is happier than he who lives his life long on the labour of others. How much happier, then, will he be who labours in the spirit of Christ's teaching, with all his strength, and caring nothing for the reward! How much happier will be the position of such a man, when around he finds a few, or, it may be, many like himself, ready and glad to do him every service in their power!

Christ's teaching on this subject is shown in the narrative of the thousands fed with two fishes and five loaves. Humanity will have attained its highest possible welfare

when men cease to try to grasp all, each one for himself, and live according to Christ's system.

Thousands had to be fed. Christ was told by one of his disciples that a man was present who had a few fishes, and that other disciples had some loaves. Jesus understood that the people, coming from a distance, would some of them have food with them, and some not. (That many of them had a certain stock with them is proved by the fact related in all the four Gospels, that at the end of the meal twelve baskets of fragments were picked up. If no one but the boy had had anything, there would not have been twelve baskets in the field.)

If Christ had not done this wonder of feeding several thousand people with a few loaves, what happens now in the world would have happened then. Those who had provisions would have eaten them, eaten more than they needed, so as to leave nothing for the others. The stingy ones, perhaps, would have carried home what they had left. Those who had brought nothing would have remained hungry, and would have looked on with angry envy at those who were feasting; some of them might have stolen from the stores of their neighbours, and there would have been quarrels and fighting; some would have gone home filled, others hungry and angry: it would have been but a repetition of what happens with us in daily life.

But Christ, with full knowledge of his purpose, ordered the multitude to sit round, told his disciples to give to others what they had, and told the people to do the same. Then, when all those who had provisions had acted as the disciples, that is, had given of their own

to others, all had sufficient ; as the food went round the circle those obtained food who had none in the beginning. Thus all were satisfied, and then remained so much bread that twelve baskets were filled with it.

Christ teaches men by this that such should be the law of human life. Labour is the necessary condition of man's existence, the source of all material good ; to keep from others, then, the fruits of our own, or their labour, is to hinder, whereas to labour for others contributes to, the welfare of mankind.

"If men do not take what they want from others, they will die of hunger," it is answered. We ought rather to say, "If men, to supply their own wants, rob each other, some will be left in misery, and will perish ;" as is indeed the case now.

Every man, however he may live, by the law of Christ, or by that of the world, lives only on the labour of others. Others have reared him, are taking care of and feeding him, and so it will ever be. But the world says, that a man by violence and threats must force others to continue to support him and his family. Christ says also, that a man is reared and taken care of by others ; but that for this state of things to last, he should not employ force, but himself try to serve others, to be as useful as he can to all, and thus become necessary to all. Men of the world will always desire to cease from supporting a man who is unnecessary to them, and forces them to work for him ; in fact, at the first opportunity they not only cease to support him, but are ready even to kill him as useless.

Which, then, is the surest, the most reasonable, and



the happiest way to live—to live according to the world or according to Christ?

The teaching of Christ is the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, and it is a mistake to believe that the fulfilment of this teaching is difficult. Not only is it not difficult, but it will inevitably be fulfilled by the man who has understood it. It gives the only possible salvation from the otherwise certain ruin of an individual existence. Nor does its fulfilment entail on us privations, but it delivers us from nine-tenths of the sufferings which we undergo for the sake of the world's teaching.

Having, then, come to understand this, I asked myself, Why had I hitherto neglected this teaching, which brings me good, salvation, and joy? why had I put into practice a very different one, which brought me only misery? The answer could only be and was this: I did not know the truth; it had too long been hidden from me.

When first the meaning of Christ's teaching lay clear before me, I did not for a moment think it would tend to the denial of the teaching of the Church. It seemed to me only that the Church had not reached the full conclusion which flows from the teaching of Christ. Yet I did not foresee that this new light would separate me from the Church, but fearing it might during my investigations, I was not keen to discover the faults of the Church, and even wilfully closed my eyes to such propositions as appeared to me obscure and strange, but not opposed to what I then considered the substance of Christian faith.

But the further I went in the study of the Gospels, the more clearly did I perceive Christ's meaning in all he taught, the more inevitable it became for me to make my choice. On the one hand lay the teaching of Christ, reasonable, clear, appealing to my conscience, offering me salvation; on the other, a doctrine directly opposed to it, which my reason and conscience alike rejected, and which gave me nothing beyond a conviction of ruin for myself and for all men. I could not but throw aside, one after the other, the propositions of the Church. I did so, with reluctance, with a struggle, with the wish to soften as much as possible my dissent from her principles, in order not to quit her fold, not to lose that most pleasant stay of faith—intercourse with the rest of my kind.

But when I had finished my study, I saw that, hard as I might try to retain something, nothing could really remain.

About this time the following incident happened to me. My son told me of a dispute between two men employed by me, neither of whom could do more than barely read or write, about a certain religious book, in which it was taught that it was no sin to put criminals to death, or to kill men in war. I could not believe that this was in print, and asked for the book, which was entitled, "A Book of Prayer with Explanations," 3rd edition (the 80th thousand), Moscow, 1879. On the 163rd page I found the following:—

"What is the sixth commandment?—Thou shalt not kill.

"What does God forbid by this commandment?—He forbids us to kill, *i.e.* to deprive a man of life.

“Is it a sin to punish criminals according to law by death, and to kill enemies in war?—It is no sin. A criminal's life is taken to put an end to a great evil which he commits; enemies are killed in war, because in war men fight for their sovereign and for their country.”

With these words closes the explanation why this commandment of God is annulled. I could not believe my eyes.

The disputants asked for my opinion. I told the one who agreed with what was printed in the book that the explanation was wrong.

“How is that? Do they print things against the law?” he asked, and I had no answer for him. I kept the book, and looked through it. It contained (1) Thirty-one prayers, with instructions for genuflexions and the folding of the hands in sign of the cross; (2) An explanation of the creeds; (3) The Beatitudes from the fifth chapter of Matthew (for some reason called commandments for the attainment of bliss); (4) The Ten Commandments (with explanations for the most part abolishing them); and (5) Canticles for the holy days.

As I have said, I not only strove to avoid condemning the faith of the Church, but I tried to look at it from its best point of view. I did not, therefore, seek for her weaknesses, and though well acquainted with the academical literature of the Church, I was ignorant of her books for general religious instruction. This book of prayer, already distributed in such enormous numbers, and provoking the doubts of the simplest persons, astonished me.

I could not believe that a prayer-book, the contents

of which were so entirely heathen, so entirely devoid of Christianity, could be deliberately distributed by the Church among her sons. To verify this, I bought and read all the books published by the Synod, or with its "benediction," containing expositions of the faith of the Church for children and for the people.

Their contents were to me almost new. At the time when I attended classes for religion it was different. As far as I remember, there were no "commandments for the attainment of bliss," no doctrine that killing was not a sin.

In all the old Russian catechisms they certainly were not, nor are they in the short Catholic catechisms. This new system was introduced by Philaret, who also composed a catechism for the military class. The "Book of Prayer with Explanations" was composed according to his catechism. The principal work is the widely spread "Christian Catechism for the Orthodox Church," for the use of all orthodox Christians, issued by command of his Majesty the Emperor.

The book is divided into three parts: of faith, of hope, and of love. The first is an analysis of the Nicene Creed. The second, an analysis of the Lord's Prayer, and of the eight verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew which form the introduction of the Sermon on the Mount, called the "commandments for the attainment of bliss." In both these parts the dogmas of the Church, her prayers, and sacraments are discussed, but there is nothing concerning actual life.

In the third part the duties of a Christian are laid down. In this part, called "of love," are given

not the commandments of Christ, but the ten commandments of Moses, and they are laid down as if for the express purpose of teaching men to disobey them. After each commandment there is a modification which is practically an abrogation; in explanation of the first, ordering man to worship God alone, the catechism teaches how to worship the angels and saints, besides the mother of God and the three persons of the Trinity. After the second, to make no idols, the catechism teaches the worship of images. In the case of the third commandment, not to swear idly, the catechism teaches us to swear whenever required to do so by the legal authorities. After the fourth, to keep the Saturday holy, the catechism teaches us to keep holy, not the Saturday, but the Sunday, as well as thirteen of the greater holidays and a whole number of smaller ones, and moreover, to fast on all the fast days, as well as on every Wednesday and Friday. After the fifth, to honour both father and mother, we are taught to honour the emperor, our native country, and all the pastors of the clergy, those who are in authority (in explanation of the latter clause there follow three pages enumerating the various representatives of authority), civil officers, judges, military officials; masters, as to their servants and as to their serfs. I quote from the sixty-fourth edition published in 1880. Twenty years have passed since the abolition of serfdom, yet no one has given himself the trouble to get rid of a phrase, which, under the pretext of the commandment to honour our parents, was inserted in the catechism for the purpose of upholding and justifying slavery.

After the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, it is at once explained that killing is to be sanctioned.

“*Q.* What is forbidden by the sixth commandment?”

“*A.* The killing of our neighbour by any means.

“*Q.* Is every case of taking life unlawful?”

“*A.* It is not unlawful when life is taken in the execution of duty, as follows:—

“(1) When a criminal is punished with death according to law.

“(2) When men kill an enemy in war for their sovereign and country.

“*Q.* What cases belong to the breaking of this commandment?”

“*A.* When any one conceals or sets free a murderer.”

And this is printed by authority in hundreds of thousands of copies, and is taught with threats and under fear of punishment to all the Russian nation as Christian doctrine! This is instilled into the innocent minds of children, of whom Christ said, “Let them come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,” whom we must resemble if we would enter that kingdom, and resemble in our ignorance of such things; of whom Christ said, “Woe to him who shall cause one of these little ones to stumble.” It is to these very children that such things are taught, as the sacred and only law of God!

This is not a secret proclamation, distributed clandestinely at personal risk, but one, the disobeying of which is punished with penal servitude. Even now, as I write this, I feel a painful sense of risk for having said that the principal commandments of God, written in all the laws and in all our hearts, cannot be set aside by words

which explain nothing—in the execution of duty for the sake of the sovereign and the country—and that this ought not to be taught to the people.

Yes, that has happened of which Christ warned men (Luke xi. 33–36, and Matt. vi. 23), saying, “Look that the light that is in thee be not darkness. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!”

The light that is in us has turned to darkness, and the darkness in which we live has become terrible.

Woe unto you, says Christ, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye others to enter. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and pray in public as performing a duty, for which you are only the more guilty. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him worse than he was. Woe unto you, blind guides!

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers. Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon



you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of Abel."

"Every blasphemy (calumny) shall be forgiven to men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."

All this seems to have been written but yesterday against those who no longer compass sea and earth, calumniating the Holy Ghost, and converting men to their faith to make them worse, but who by violence oblige men to accept their faith, and who persecute and hunt to death every prophet and righteous man who attempts to expose their deceit.

I then became convinced that the teaching of the Church, notwithstanding that it calls itself Christian, is itself the very darkness with which Christ struggled, and against which he commanded his disciples to struggle.

The teaching of Christ, like every other religious system, may be looked at from two points of view: (1) As instruction for the life of men, how men should live individually and together; (2) As an explanation of the reasons why men should live in this way and in no other; the first being an ethical system, the second its metaphysical basis. The one is the consequence, and at the same time the cause, of the other. Man ought to live thus, because this is the end for which he was appointed; or, this end being appointed for man, he ought to live thus. These two sides of every doctrine are found in all the religions of the world. Such is the religion of the Brahmins, of Confucius, of Buddha, of Moses, and such is the religion of Christ. It teaches us at once how to live, and the reason for that life.

But as it has happened to all religions, so also to Christ's teaching. Men fall away from the true law of life, and many among them are found to justify their fall. Sitting, according to the expression of Christ, in the seat of Moses, they explain the metaphysical side of the teaching so that the ethical requirements of the creed become no longer obligatory, and are replaced by outward observances of worship, by rites and ceremonies. This phenomenon is common to all religions, but it seems to me to have never been so sharply defined as in Christianity. And this is so, because Christ's teaching contains the highest of all doctrines, and because the metaphysical and ethical principles of Christ are so inextricably bound up together, and so clearly explain one another, that to separate them is impossible without depriving both of meaning.

And it is impossible for yet another reason, that his teaching is, in principle, Protestantism ; it is a denial, not only of the rites of Judaism, but of all outward worship. Hence this separation could not but pervert the whole system of Christianity and deprive it of all meaning. So it has been. The separation between the teaching of life and the explanations of life itself began with the preaching of Paul, who was unacquainted with the ethical doctrines expressed in the Gospel of Matthew, and who preached a cabalistic metaphysical theory foreign to Christ's spirit. It became complete in the time of Constantine, when it was found possible to clothe the whole system of pagan life in a Christian dress, and give to it the name of Christianity.

From the time of Constantine, a heathen of heathens,

whom the Church for his crimes and vices counts among the choir of Christian saints, date the Councils; and then the metaphysical side of Christianity became infinitely the most important part of the whole system.

In time this metaphysical teaching, with its attendant rites, departing more and more from its own fundamental principles, became by degrees the state of things we now see, a teaching which professes to explain the most incomprehensible mysteries of heavenly life, to appoint the most complicated forms of divine worship, but does not offer the slightest religious help towards a life on earth.

All religions, except that of Christianity as taught by the Church, require from those who profess them, besides the observance of rites, a proof of their faith by the performance of good and by abstinence from evil actions. Judaism requires circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, the year of jubilee, almsgiving, and many other particulars. Mahometanism requires circumcision, prayer five times a day, tithes for the poor, adoration of the tomb of the prophet, and so forth. It is the same with all other religions. Whether these requirements be good or bad, they involve at least positive acts. Pseudo-Christianity alone requires nothing from its followers, nothing either to be done or left undone, unless we count the fasts and prayers which the Church herself considers not obligatory. The sacraments are all that this Christianity insists on. The sacraments, however, are not performed by the believer himself but by others for him. A so-called Christian is not bound to any particular act, nor to abstain from any

particular act, in order to be saved ; the Church does everything for him. The Church baptizes and anoints him, gives him the communion and extreme unction, and confesses him, and prays for him—and he is saved.

The Christian Church from the time of Constantine has required no special acts from her followers, nor has she enjoined them to refrain from any particular acts. She has adopted and consecrated all that existed in the pagan world, divorce and slavery, courts of justice, and all the forms of authority which existed before her, wars, and capital punishment ; she has only required, at baptism, and that again only in earlier days, a verbal renunciation of evil ; later, when infants were baptized, she ceased to require even that.

The Church has accepted in words the teaching of Christ, but in actual life has distinctly denied him.

Instead of guiding the life of the world, the Church, to please the world, gave an interpretation to the metaphysical teaching of Christ, which warped it into laying no obligations on men for their way of life, and made no hindrance to their living as they pleased. The Church gave way to the world, and having once done that, in turn she followed it. The world did all that it wished, leaving the Church to do what she could with her explanations of life. The world erected its own institutions, in flagrant defiance of Christ's teaching, and the Church devised allegorical metaphors to prove that men living contrary to the law of Christ were living in obedience to it. The result was a life worse than that of the old pagan world, and its justification by the

Church as one in harmony with the essence of Christ's teaching.

But time went on, and the light of the true teaching of Christ as it shines in the Gospels, notwithstanding the efforts of the Church to conceal the truth, through the so-called heresies, and even through the freethinkers of the world, penetrated to the hearts of the people. Men saw the falseness of the Church's teaching, and began to change the life justified by her, and so long led by them, into one more in accordance with the teaching of Christ which had reached them independently of her.

Thus it was that, in spite of the Church, men put an end to slavery, approved by her ; put an end to class privileges ; to punishment for religious convictions justified by her, to the power of emperors and popes whom she had consecrated. Thus it is that they have now begun, in a natural sequence, to put an end to property and State. The Church made no resistance ; she can make none now, for the abolition of these injustices rests on the very doctrines of Christianity which she professes to teach while doing her best to prevent.

The doctrine of the life of man has become emancipated from the Church, and is independent of her.

Yet she still has her explanations, but explanations of what? A metaphysical explanation of doctrine has a meaning, when there are practical rules for life which it explains. But the Church gives no such rules. She had an explanation once for the life which she herself instituted, but which exists no longer ; if that explanation remains still, no one believes in it. She has nothing

left her, but her temples, her images, her vestments, and her sermons.

The Church carried the light of Christ's teaching for eighteen centuries, and wishing to hide it in her robes was herself burnt in its flame. The world abandoned her and her institutions for the sake of those very principles of Christianity which she herself had unwillingly preserved. It lives now without her. This is a fact which it is now impossible to conceal. All those that really live in this European world of ours—not merely in sad or spiteful contemplation, a drag on the life of others, but actively and healthily—have fallen away from the Church, and live their own lives apart from her. And let it not be said that this is only true of the west of Europe. Russia, with her millions of rational Christians, both educated and uneducated, who have thrown off the yoke of the Church, proves beyond dispute that she herself, thank God, is in this respect not worse off than the rest of Europe.

The authority of government rests on tradition, on science, on the choice of the people, on brute force, on what you will, but not on the Church.

Wars, the relations of States to one another, rest on the principle of nationality, of the balance of power, and so forth, but not on the principles of the Church.

Government ignores the Church ; the idea that justice and property could be based on her, is in our day only laughable.

Science not only does not co-operate to strengthen her teaching, but follows a development which is involuntarily hostile to her.

Art, which once served the Church exclusively, is now independent of her.

Nor is it only that humanity has now emancipated itself from the yoke of the Church. The only feeling it has for her is contempt, so long as she cannot interfere in the affairs of life ; but hatred as soon as she does anything to recall the memory of her former rights. If the outward form which we call a Church still exists, it is only because men hesitate to break the chalice which once held a treasure ; and thus alone can be explained the existence in the present age of the Catholic, Orthodox, and different Protestant Churches.

All Churches resemble sentinels carefully guarding a supposed prisoner who has long ago escaped, and who is now a free man in their midst attacking them.

All by which the world now really lives, socialism, communism, political economy, utilitarianism, the freedom and equality of men and of women, the utmost conception of men, the sacredness of labour, of reason, of science, of art, all that makes the world advance, all that the Church condemns, are parts of the teaching which the Church herself, while striving to hide the teaching of Christ, unconsciously preserved through the ages.

In our days the life of the world rolls on its course completely outside the influence of the Church. Her teachers have remained so far behind our prayers, that men of the world no longer hear their voices. In truth, there are no voices to hear, for those the Church still gives forth only concern a state of things which the world has long outgrown, and if it exists at all is fast falling into irreparable ruin.



We are as men rowing in a boat with one who steers them. They believed in their helmsman, and he steered them well. But as time went on, their helmsman was changed for another, who did not steer at all. Still the boat kept on its course swiftly and easily, and for a time the men, pleased with their smooth course, noticed not that their helmsman was idle. But at last they satisfied themselves that he was wanting, and after mocking him, finally threw him overboard. This would have mattered little; but it did matter, that, in their disgust at a useless helmsman, the rowers forgot they knew not whither they were going. And this is how it has fared with the Christian world. The Church is no longer at the helm; it is easy to float on, and we have floated far. All the boasted progress of our nineteenth century means only that we float without a rudder, that we float on, not knowing whither. We live in our own way, and know not why we so live. But men cannot dare thus with impunity.

If men did nothing for themselves, if the position they occupy were due to some external force, then indeed they might reasonably enough answer those who ask them why they were in such a position, by owning they know nothing, save that they have always been in it. But men make a position for themselves, for others, and especially for their children. When, then, they are asked, why they assemble armies by millions, to kill and mutilate each other; why, at prodigious cost of money and labour, they erect towns not needed by them, and even injurious; why they form their childish tribunals, and send men whom they account criminals from France

to Cayenne, from Russia to Siberia, when they themselves know how senseless a thing it is to do so ; why they leave the agricultural life so dear to them, to labour in factories and at other work which they dislike ; why they educate their children to follow the very life of which they disapprove ; why they do all this ;—men must have an answer. If these things were agreeable to them, men will still ask why they are so ; but since they are hard and unpleasing, and are carried out with trouble and controversy, it is impossible for men not to consider why these things are done. Men must either cease from them, or give a reason for their continuance.

Men answer, that a Jew lived after his own will, made wars, punished men with death, built temples, and ordered his life in the way he did because it was so appointed by the law, which in his conviction proceeded from God Himself. It was so with the peoples of India and China, with the Romans and the Mahometans ; it was so with Christians a hundred years ago, and it is the same still with the mass of ignorant Christians.

To such questions the latter answer thus : Military service, wars, tribunals, executions—all these exist by the law of God, which is transmitted to us through the Church. The present world is a fallen world. All the evil that exists, exists by the will of God as a punishment for the sins of the world, and correct that evil we cannot. We can only save our souls by faith, by the sacraments, by prayer, and by submission to the will of God as shown to us by the Church. The Church also teaches us that every Christian should obey without dispute the will of the sovereign, the anointed of God, and that of his

appointed governors, should guard by force his own and others' property, should make war, put men to death, and himself bear the punishment of death when inflicted by those put in authority over him by God.

Be these explanations good or bad, they were accepted by the faithful Christians, as by the Jews, the Buddhists, and the Mahometans, in explanation of all the phenomena of life, and a man who lives according to a law which he believes divine cannot be said to act against his reason. But the time is now come when only the most ignorant believe in such explanations, and when the number of such believers diminishes every day and every hour. There is no possibility of stopping this movement. Men cannot be held back from following those who march in front, and all will come in time to stand where their leaders stand now. They stand over an abyss. They are in a terrible position. They make a life for themselves and for all who follow them; yet are they in complete ignorance why they do so.

Not a single leader of the day can answer this simple question—Why do you lead the life which you do lead? I have asked this question of hundreds of men, and never got a direct answer. Instead of an answer to the direct personal question, "Why do you live thus, and do this?" I always received an answer to a question which I had not put.

A believing Catholic, Protestant, or orthodox Christian, to the question, why he lives as he does, that is, in opposition to the teaching of Christ, whom he acknowledges as God, instead of a direct answer, always begins to speak of the pitiful condition of the present un-

believing generation, of the evil men who cause unbelief, and of the meaning and the future of the true Church. But why he does not do what his faith commands he will not say. Instead of answering for himself, he speaks of the general condition of humanity and of the Church, as though his own life had no meaning for him, and he were only occupied with the salvation of mankind, and with what he calls the Church.

A philosopher, to whatever school he belongs, be he an idealist, a spiritualist, a pessimist, or a positivist, to the question, why he lives as he does, that is, in contradiction to his own philosophical theories, instead of answering directly, always speaks of the progress of mankind, of the historical law of that progress which he has discovered, and by which mankind is urged towards the goal of good. But he never gives a direct answer to the question, why he does not order his own life by the light of what he believes to be reasonable. The philosopher, like the believer, seems to be concerned, not with his own life, but with the study of the general laws of humanity.

An average man, that is, the enormous majority of half-believing, half-unbelieving civilized men, those who are always complaining of their own lot in life, and of the conditions of man's life in general, and who foresee ruin threatening everything, to the question, why he lives a life which he condemns and does nothing to better it, invariably, instead of answering directly, begins to speak, not of himself, but of something general, of the administration of justice, of commerce, of States, of civilization. If he be a public man or a lawyer he will say, But how

would the government go on were I, bettering my own life, to cease to take part in it? What would commerce do without me? he will say, if he be a man of business.

Thus always speaks the average man, as though the problem of his life were, not to do the good to which he feels impelled, but to serve the state, commerce, or civilization. The average man answers exactly in the same way as the believer and the philosopher. He, instead of the personal question, substitutes a general one, as do both the latter, and he does this because he has no answer to the personal question, because he has no real doctrine of life, and is ashamed.

He is ashamed, because he feels himself in the humiliating position of a man who has no understanding of the principles of life, whereas a man never lived and cannot live without some theory of life. It is only in our Christian world that, instead of a theory of life, that is, instead of religion, an explanation has been substituted to prove that life ought to be what it was at some time or other formerly, and that something needed by no one has been substituted for religion; while life itself no longer depends on any theoretical principles, that is, remains without any determining aim.

Nor is this all. As usual, Science has proclaimed this fortuitous and monstrous condition of our society to be one of the laws that govern mankind. Learned men, as Tiele, Herbert Spencer, and others seriously speak of religion, understanding by it metaphysical theories about the beginning of all things and so forth, never suspecting that they were speaking not of religion, but only of a part of it.

Hence has arisen the astonishing phenomenon, that in this age many clever and learned men naïvely believe that they have got rid of all religion, merely because they do not accept the metaphysical explanations of the beginning of things which, at some time or other and for some one or other, explained the meaning of life. It never enters into their heads that they must in some way or other live, and that the something, which is the cause of their living in one particular way and not in another, is their religion. They imagine that they have very elevated convictions and no belief; but, however they may talk, a belief they have directly their reason urges them to the performance of any act, for all acts prompted by reason are determined by belief. The acts of such men are determined solely by the belief that what is commanded should always be done. The religion of men who reject religion is the religion of submission to all that is done by the great majority of men; in other words, it is the religion of obedience to constituted authority.

It is possible to live after the teaching of the world, to live an animal life, without acknowledging anything higher and more obligatory than such an authority. But whoever lives thus cannot affirm that he lives in accordance with reason; before such an affirmation we must answer the question, what theory of life we consider reasonable. But we, unhappy that we are, have not only got no such theory, but have lost the consciousness of the necessity for one.

Ask any of the men of our day, believers or unbelievers, what theory of life they follow, and they will

be obliged to confess that they only conform to one teaching, that of the law as laid down by those concerned with its administration and enforced by the police. This is the only systematic doctrine of life which Europeans accept. They know well that this doctrine is not from heaven, nor from the prophets, nor from the wise among men, they for ever condemn the way in which the officers of the law exercise their authority ; yet they accept their regulations as the basis of their lives, and obey them as enforced by the police without dispute, even in their most terrible shape. Let it be once laid down by law that every youth shall be ready if required to outrage, or even to slay his fellow, and all the fathers and mothers who have grown-up sons will obey this law, drawn up, perhaps, by a bribed official and to be changed, perhaps, the next day.

The conception of laws which are perfectly consonant to reason, and by the conviction of all men obligatory on all, has been to such an extent lost in our present society, that the existence of a reasonable law among the Jewish peoples, which gives a meaning to all their life, obligatory, not because enforced, but because it satisfies their inward conviction, is considered a fact only to be found among the Jews. That the Hebrews only obeyed what they profoundly believed to be an indisputable truth proceeding directly from God, that is to say, obeyed only that which agreed with their consciences, is considered a specialty of the people. The normal position of an educated man among us is considered to be, that he should obey the laws ordained by a class of despicable officials, and enforced by police officers with



pistols in their hands ; laws which each among us, or at any rate by far the greater number, holds in his conscience to be wrong.

I have sought in vain throughout our civilized society for any kind of clearly expressed principles to guide and explain life. There are none. There is not even the conviction that they are needed. Nay, there is even a strange persuasion that they are not needed ; that religion is only a given form of speaking of a future life and of God, a ceremony, very useful for the saving of souls according to the opinion of some, and of no use for anything according to that of others ; that life goes on of itself, and that for it no basis nor principles are required ; it is only needful to do what is commanded.

Of the two things which lie at the foundation of a faith, rules for conduct, and an explanation of life's meaning, the first is considered unimportant and irrelevant to faith, and the second, the explanation of life passed away, or conclusions and guesses with respect to the historical course of life, is looked upon as most important and serious. In all that really constitutes the life of man, in all practical questions—is he to go and kill men or not ? Is he to judge others or not ? Is he to educate his children in this way or in that ? The men of our society give themselves up unreservedly into the hands of others, as ignorant as themselves why they live, and yet empowered to control the lives of their fellow-men.

And such a life men consider reasonable, and are not ashamed.

The gulf between the explanation of faith which is called faith, and faith itself, which is named social

and national life, has now become impassable, and the great majority of civilized men are left with a belief in the policeman and the magistrate.

Such a position would be terrible, if it were universal; but, fortunately, even in our time there are men, and the best men of our times, who are not satisfied with such a faith, and have their own ideas, on life and human conduct.

Such men are looked upon as most noxious and dangerous, and above all as unbelievers, while in reality they are the only true believers of our time; for not only do they possess a general belief, but they specially believe in the teaching of Christ, in some parts, if not in all.

They are often quite ignorant of Christ's teaching. They do not understand him, and frequently even, like their enemies, do not accept the leading principle of his faith, non-resistance to evil. Nay, sometimes they may be said to hate him. But their whole faith concerning the constitution of life is taken from Christ's teaching. However they may be persecuted and calumniated, they are not the less the only men who do not submit without a murmur to all that is commanded, and consequently the only men of our society who do not lead an animal, but a reasonable life; the only people who believe.

The thread binding together the world and the Church, and giving a meaning to the former, has been growing more and more frayed, as the vital forces which sustain life have been gradually more and more absorbed into the world. Now that these forces have all passed over, the thread has become a mere impediment.

This is the mysterious process of birth, and it takes place before our eyes. At one and the same time the last link with the Church is broken, and the process of independent life begins.

The teaching of the Church, with the dogmas, temples, and hierarchy, is undoubtedly linked with the teaching of Christ.

Organs which have become useless in an altered state are thrown off by nature, as no more than an impediment, and new links are formed with life. So it has been with the Church. Our present development was born of the teaching of Christ, and the Church was one of the organs of its body. That organ has now done its appointed work and has become useless, an impediment. The world cannot guide the Church, but the deliverance of the world has not yet ripened into life. That will begin for it when it recognizes, like an infant, its own want of strength and need for food. This is what must happen to our Christian society ; it must cry aloud from the feeling of its helplessness, of its need of nourishment, and that feeling alone can bring it, as it does the child to the mother's breast, where it alone can be fed.

What happens to the new-born infant must happen also to our European world, with its outward self-confidence and courage, its inward terror of perplexity. The infant sprawls and struggles and cries, gets angry, and knows not what it would be at. It feels instinctly that it requires food, yet knows not where to seek it.

A new-born lamb uses both eyes and ears, can wag its tail, and jump, and kick. It seems from its determined look to know everything, but, poor thing, it knows

nothing. All this determination and energy it has received with its mother's blood, and she can give it no more. It is in a blissful and at the same time a desperate position. It is full of freshness and strength, but it is lost unless it go to its mother for her milk.

It is the same with us. Look what a complicated, apparently reasonable, and energetic life boils over in our European world, as though all these people knew what they were doing and why they did it. See with what determination, courage, and skill men act. Art, science, industry, and social government, organization, all is full of life, but it is only alive because it has been fed by a bountiful mother. There was a Church which passed into the veins of the life of the world the invigorating blood of the teaching of Christ. Every part of the world's multiform life fed on it, was born through it, and grew with it. But in time the work of the Church was done, and the vital forces ceased to flow from her. All the organs of the world are alive still, but the spring from which it once drew its nourishment has dried up, and a new one has not yet been found. Men are seeking it everywhere, save from her who first gave it them. They, like the lamb, profit still by what the mother gave them before their birth, but have yet to understand that the mother still alive alone can give it, but in an altered form.

What the world now has to do, is to understand that the former process of unconscious nourishment has ceased, and that another and conscious process is necessary.

This new process consists in consciously accepting

those truths of Christian teaching which were formerly unconsciously given to mankind through the Church, and by which mankind still lives. Men must again hold aloft the light by which they once saw, but which has been hidden from them ; they must place it before themselves and before all men, and consciously live by it.

The teaching of Christ determining life and explaining it, stands now, as it stood eighteen hundred years ago, before the world. Formerly the world listened to the explanations of the Church, which, though it hid Christ's teaching, seemed to the world sufficient then for its life ; but the Church has outlived her time, and the world has no explanation of its own new life. It cannot but feel its helplessness ; it cannot, therefore, but accept the teaching of Christ.

And he above all things teaches us this, that men should believe in the light while the light is in them. He teaches men to prize above all things this light of reason, that they may live in conformity with it, and no longer do what they themselves think unreasonable. If you think it unreasonable to kill the Turks or the Germans, do not kill them ; if you think it unreasonable to take away their labour from poor men by force, in order to wear a top hat or tight stays, or to furnish a drawing-room, do not do so ; if you think it unreasonable to confine in a prison men perverted by idleness because there they must undergo dangerous companionship, and the worst idleness, do not do it ; if you think it unreasonable to live in an infected town atmosphere, when you may live in the fresh country air, unreasonable to teach your children, before all else, the grammars of dead

languages, do not do so. Do not do what the whole of European society is doing now ; living a life, and doing that which it believes to be unreasonable, and from want of belief in its own reason, living contrary to it.

The teaching of Christ is light. Light gives light on all sides, and darkness cannot encircle it. We cannot but receive light, when light shines on us. We cannot dispute, cannot disagree about it. With the teaching of Christ it is impossible to disagree, because it encircles all the errors in which men live without encountering them like the ether which physicists tell us pervades all matter. It is equally necessary for every man on earth, whatever be his social position. It cannot be rejected by men, not because its metaphysical explanation of life cannot be denied (anything may be denied), but because it alone gives those practical rules for life without which the common life of humanity and the individual life of the man is impossible if men wish to live like men, to live in the light of reason.

The strength of this teaching lies, not in its explanations of the meaning of life, but in what follows from it—in its rules for life. Christ's metaphysical teaching is not new. It is the same doctrine which is written in the hearts of men, and which has been preached by all the sages of the world. The strength of his teaching lies in the application of his metaphysical doctrine of life.

The metaphysical basis of the ancient doctrine of the Jews is the same as that of Christ—love to God and to our neighbour. But the application of this doctrine by Moses and by Christ was widely different. God, by Moses, as was understood among the Hebrews, required

the fulfilment of no less than six hundred and thirteen commandments, often without sense and cruel, and all depending on the authority of Scripture. The law of Christ, derived from the same metaphysical basis, is expressed in five commandments, reasonable, merciful, bearing in themselves their own meaning and justification, and embracing the whole life of man.

The doctrine of Christ cannot but be accepted by those followers of Judaism, Buddhism, Mahometism, and other creeds who have doubted the truth of their own law; still less can it be rejected by those of our own Christian world who have now no moral law at all.

It does not dispute the point of view from which men of the world regard the world; it agrees with it, beforehand, and itself embracing it, gives them what they have not, what they seek because it is necessary to them: it gives them a way of living, not new, but one familiar and natural to all.

You, if you be a Christian, to whatever sect or church you belong, believe in the creation of the world, in the Trinity, in the fall and redemption of man, in the sacraments, in prayer, in your Church. Christ does not dispute your conception of the world; he agrees on all points with it, but in addition, he gives you something you have not. Believing as you now do, you are conscious that your life and the world's life are full of evil, yet you know not how to better them. Christ (who is also your God) offers you simple and easy rules of life, which will rid you and other men of this tormenting evil. Believe in the resurrection, in the heavenly paradise, in



hell, in the pope, in the Church, in the sacraments, and in redemption ; pray as your faith directs you, fast, sing psalms—nothing of all this is to be altered, but at the same time do those things which Christ has ordained for you to your good : be not angry, commit not fornication, do not swear, do not defend yourself by violence, and do not make war.

It may be that you will fail in the observance of one or other of these rules. Urged by some sudden temptation you may break one of them, even as now under temptation you sometimes break the rules of your own faith, of the civil law, or of propriety. This may happen under temptation and excitement ; but in your quiet moments so order your life that always you may find it hard to give way to anger, to live loosely, to swear, to defend yourself by force.

You cannot refuse to accept this obligation, for it is laid on you by God.

You, if you be an unbelieving philosopher, to whatever school you belong, you say that everything in the world follows the law which you have discovered. Christ disputes not with you ; he is willing to accept the law discovered by you. But besides your law, through which will be reached, after thousands of years, the good which you desire and have prepared for mankind, there is your own personal life, which you may live either in accordance with the dictates of reason or against them. For this personal life of yours you have no rules, except those given by men commonly despised, and enforced by the police. This want Christ supplies by offering you rules which will certainly agree with your law, whether

it be altruism or free-will, for either is but a bad paraphrase of Christ's teaching.

You, if you be the average man, half a believer, half an unbeliever, who have no time to think on the meaning of human life, you also have no clearly defined conception of the world ; you do what all do. Neither with you does Christ dispute.

He says, " Friend, you are not capable of disputing and testing the truth of the teaching offered you, it is easier to act as do others ; but, however modest you may be, you still feel an inward judge, sometimes approving the actions which follow those of others, sometimes disapproving them. However lowly be your lot, you have still occasion to think and ask yourself, " Shall I act as others do, or not ? "

At such moments you will feel the strength that lies in Christ's rules ; they will give you a sure answer to this question, because they embrace your whole life ; and they will answer you in accordance with your reason and your conscience. If you are nearer to belief than to unbelief, then, by so acting, you are fulfilling the will of God ; if you are nearer freethinking, then, by so acting, you are acting by the most reasonable rules which exist in the world of which you yourself will become convinced, for the rules of Christ carry in themselves their own meaning and justification.

Christ said (John xii. 31), " Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Again (John xvi. 33), " These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world

ye have tribulation ; but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world."

And truly the world, that is, the evil of the world, has been overcome.

If the world of evil still exist, it is only as something half dead ; it has no longer a vital principle. For him who believes the commandments of Christ the world of evil is not ; it is overcome by the reasonable conviction of the Son of man. The train once started still pursues its straight course, but the driver, having seen the danger signal, has applied the break.

"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world ; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith " (1 John v. 4).

The faith which overcomes the world is faith in the teaching of Christ.

I believe in the teaching of Christ, and my belief is, that complete happiness on earth is only possible when all shall believe with me in his teaching.

I believe that the fulfilment of his teaching is possible, easy, and joyful.

I believe that his teaching is neglected. I, even if alone among those who neglect it, can do nothing to save my life from inevitable ruin ; but by fulfilling it, even as men who, finding the door in a burning house, can do nothing better than to pass out by it.

I believe that the life I lived in obedience to the dictates of the world was a torment to me, and that only a life spent in accordance with the teaching of Christ can give me the good which the Father of life has ordained for me.

I believe that this teaching brings happiness within the reach of all mankind, that it will save me from inevitable ruin, and give me here on earth the highest good, consequently that I am bound in reason to obey it.

John says (i. 17), "For the law was given by Moses ; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The teaching of Christ is happiness and truth. Once, not knowing the truth, I knew not happiness or good. Taking evil for good, I fell into evil, and mistrusted my own impulse to seek good. Now I understand, and believe that the good to which I aspired was the will of the Father, the greatest and most lawful reality of my life.

Christ had said to me, Live for the sake of good, not evil ; believe not those treacherous stumbling-blocks which, deceiving you with the likeness of good, surprise you into evil. Your good and your happiness is in your unity with all men ; evil is the destruction of the unity of the son of man. Do not reject the good which is given you.

Christ has shown me that the unity of the son of man is the love of men for one another, not, as it formerly seemed to me, the end to which men's efforts should be directed ; and that this unity in love is their natural state, the state to which children are born, as he himself has said, and in which men have always lived until it has been destroyed by deceit, by error, and by temptation.

But Christ has done more than merely show me this. Beyond all possibility of mistake, he has enunciated in his commandments all the temptations ready to steal me from this natural state of unity, love, and good, and entice me into evil ; in them he has also furnished me

with a means of salvation from those same temptations. How, then, can I disbelieve him and his commandments? This, and this alone, is my faith.

The first evil he shows me which destroys the good of my life is enmity to other men, my anger against them. I cannot disbelieve him, and therefore cannot consciously indulge a feeling of enmity to others ; cannot, as I did once, be glad of my anger, be proud of it, excite and justify it by asserting my own importance and wisdom, and the insignificance, foolishness, and lost state of other men. Now at the first approach of the feeling of anger, I am forced to confess that I am myself alone to blame, and therefore I straightway seek a reconciliation with those who are at enmity with me.

Nor is that all ; besides knowing now that my anger is an unnatural and unhealthy condition of mind, I know, too, what particular temptation led me into it. The temptation lay in my separating myself from other men, in counting only a few of them my equals, and despising the rest as insignificant men of naught (*raca*), or as stupid and uneducated (*fools*). I see now that this way of talking of others as *raca* and *fools*, was the chief cause of my separation from men. Recalling my former life, I see now that I never allowed my anger to burn against those whom I considered my superiors, that I never offended them ; but the slightest act of one whom I considered beneath me was enough to rouse my anger against him, and to make me offend him ; the higher I thought myself above a man, the more carelessly I offended him ; sometimes even my imaginary supposition of the lowness of a man's position was sufficient cause of

offence. Now I know that he is highest among men who makes himself the lowest, who is ready to serve all. I know now why he who stands high among men is an abomination before God ; why there is woe for the rich and famous, and why the poor and meek are blessed.

Only lately have I understood and believed this, but it has wholly changed my relative estimation of the different orders of men. All that formerly seemed to me fine and noble—honours, fame, education, wealth, all the artificiality and refinement of life, a luxurious household, food, dress, and outward appearance—all this has become for me poor and mean. All that seemed to me poor and mean—the peasantry, and obscure position, poverty, rough manners, simplicity in household arrangements, food, dress, and entertainment, has now become for me fine and noble. And now that I am conscious of the truth, though in a moment of forgetfulness I may give way to anger and offend my brother, in my quiet hour I spurn the temptation, which, raising me above my kind, deprives me of my one true good—unity and love—even as a man cannot set again for himself the trap into which he has just fallen. Now I can lend my aid to nothing which tends to raise me above others, to separate me from my fellows. I cannot, as I once used, accept for myself or others any titles or rank, or any name but that of “man ;” I cannot seek fame, or praise, or learning which will tend to separate me from others ; I cannot but strive to get free from my wealth ; in my way of life, in food, in dress, and in all outward appearances, I must seek all that tends to bind me more closely to my fellows.

The second evil is loose living—living, that is to say, not with the woman to whom I am united, but with another. I cannot question it, and therefore cannot, as I did formerly, consider such a mode of life as something elevated and belonging to man's nature ; I cannot justify it to myself by my love for beauty, my passionate temperament, or the faults of my wife ; I cannot, at the first symptom of loose desires, but confess to myself that I am in an unhealthy condition, and so must seek every means to free myself from this evil.

But knowing that incontinence is an evil for me, I know also the temptation which led me into it, and therefore can no longer give occasion for it. I know now that the chief cause of temptation is, not that we cannot restrain our loose desires, but that the majority of men and women are left by those to whom they were first united. I know that every desertion by man or woman of the one they first lived with, is that very divorce which Christ forbids, because those left by the first husband or wife carry incontinence through the world. When I remember what led me to this mode of life, I see now that, apart from an education worthy of savages, which both physically and mentally nourished loose desires, and justified them by the highest application of intellect, my chief temptation arose from my having abandoned the woman with whom I first lived, and from the universal condition of all women so abandoned. I see now that the chief strength of the temptation lay, not in my own passions, but in the unnatural position in which I and the women around me were placed. I cannot make a difference between



unions sanctioned, as it is said, by marriage and those which are not. I can only consider as sacred and binding the communion into which a man can enter but once.

I understood now the words of Jesus, "He that made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife ; and the twain shall become one flesh. In that they are no more twain but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

I understood that monogamy was the natural law of humanity, which cannot with impunity be violated. I understood perfectly now, the words which are addressed to him who has abandoned the companion with whom he has lived, to unite with another, and which denounces him for having introduced into the world an evil, which will turn in the end against himself.

This I believed, and this faith changed my former appreciation of what is good and great—bad and low in life. What had appeared to me best—a refined, æsthetic life,—poetic, passionate loves—sung by all poets and artists—now seemed evil and distasteful. On the other hand, a rude and labouring life, which subdues the passions, seemed good to me ; great and to be revered also, not so much the human institution of marriage, which affords an exterior legality to the union of man and woman, as the real communion of male and female, which, once consummated, can never again be dissolved without the violation of the will of God. And if still, in moments of oblivion, I am carried away by evil passions,

I can no longer, recognizing the snare which lures me on to evil, act unconsciously as before I was accustomed.

I cannot now desire or seek the physical idleness and sumptuous existence which developed in me an excess of sensuality, I can no longer seek out those amusements which are as fuel to the flame of sensual love—romances, most poems, music, theatres, balls, which in former days not only seemed to me harmless but highly refined pleasures.

I cannot now desert my wife, knowing that such desertion is a chief snare both for me, for her, and for others.

I can no longer aid the voluptuous and lazy existence of others, no longer assist or be a partner in those licentious modes of killing time—romantic literature, theatres, operas, balls, and so forth, which are still stumbling-blocks for me and for others. I cannot encourage celibacy in those ripe for marriage, or aid in the separation of wives from their husbands.

The third evil to be guarded against is the taking of oaths. Now that I have perceived this, I cannot as before take an oath to any one, or about anything, and cannot now, as formerly, justify my oath to myself by saying that it can hurt no one, that all men do so, that it is required by the State, and that it will be worse for me or for others if I refuse to obey. I know now that it is an evil thing for me and for others, and I cannot do it.

But this is not all ; besides knowing that, I knew also the temptation which lured me into this evil, and can no longer give occasion for it. I know that the temptation

arises from the name of God being used to consecrate deceit. The deceit consists in a man binding himself beforehand to obey the commands of men which might transgress the laws of God. I know now, that the evil which is the most terrible on earth from its consequences, murder in war, imprisonment, executions, torture, is caused by this temptation, in the name of which all responsibility is shifted from those who effect these evils.

When I now recall the many evils which forced me to condemn men instead of loving them, I see that many of them were caused by this practice, by the belief in the necessity for obeying the will of another. I understand now the meaning of the words, all that is more than a simple affirmation or denial, yea and nay, every promise given beforehand, is an evil. Understanding this, I believe that oaths ruin the good in my life and in that of others, and this belief changes my estimation of good and bad, of high and low. All that formerly seemed to me fine and noble, the obligation of fidelity to the government confirmed by an oath, the extortion of oaths from men, and all the acts contrary to conscience done in the name of an oath—all this appears to me now bad and mean. And therefore I cannot now disobey the commandments of Christ which forbid me to give or exact an oath, I cannot any longer help to make men believe that an oath is important and necessary, or harmless as so many believe.

The fourth evil is resistance of evil by violence. I cannot disbelieve that this is an evil for myself and other men, and therefore cannot consciously commit it,

and I cannot, as I did formerly, justify this evil by saying that it is necessary for the defence of myself and others. I cannot, when I first perceive that I am tending myself to the use of violence, but at once refuse to do so, and strive with all my power to put an end to the evil.

And moreover, I know now the temptation which led me into this evil, that it arose from believing that the security of my life can be assured by the defence of myself and of my property against others; I recognize that the most part of human suffering proceeds from this, that men instead of giving up their labour to another, by force take away the labour of others. Remembering all the evil which I caused myself and others, and all the evil which others wrought, I see that the most part of it proceeded from our belief, that it was possible by defending our property, to secure and better our life.

I understand now the meaning of the words—a man is born, not to be worked for, but himself to work for others—and again, the labourer is worthy of his food. I believe now, that good in my own life and in that of others is only possible when each labours, not for himself, but for others, and not only does not withhold his labour from others, but gives it up to any one by whom it is needed.

All, therefore, that once seemed to me fine and noble—wealth, property of every kind, honours, the consciousness of our own dignity and rights—all this has now become for me bad and mean; while all that once seemed to me so mean—labour for others, poverty, humiliation, and renunciation of all property and rights—has now become for me fine and noble. If no longer

now, in a moment of forgetfulness, can I let myself be carried away to defend my own property or that of others by violence, still less can I calmly and consciously help to give occasion for a temptation, which ruins myself and others. I cannot strive to acquire property ; I cannot employ any violence whatever against any one, except on behalf of an infant, and that only to deliver it from an imminent evil ; I cannot take part in any of the branches of the administration which have for their object the protection of men and their property by the use of force ; I cannot be a judge, nor take any part in a trial ; be a chief over others, nor serve under any chief ; nor can I give help to others to do these things.

The fifth evil is the distinction which we make between our own nation and foreigners. Feeling that it is so, if, in a moment of forgetfulness, enmity arise in me against one of another nation, in my quiet moments I confess that this is a false feeling. I cannot justify myself, as I formerly did, by saying that my nation stands above all others, or by the errors, cruelty, or barbarism of another people ; I cannot at the first symptom of this feeling but strive to be more friendly to a foreigner even than to one of my own countrymen. I know now the temptation which led me into this evil, and can no longer, as I once did, consciously and calmly give occasion for it. I know that this temptation arose from the false belief that my own good is bound up with the good of the men of my own nation only, and not with the good of all men on earth, that my unity with other men cannot be destroyed by the line of a frontier or the arrangement of a government. I know now that

all men everywhere are brothers and equals. Remembering all the evil which I did, suffered, and saw done through national enmities, it is clear to me that the cause of all was a gross deceit, called by the fine name of patriotism or love for our country.

Looking back on my education, I see now that the feeling of enmity to other nations, the feeling of separation from them, was no natural one, but artificially inspired by a senseless course of education. I understand now the meaning of the words, Do good to your enemies, do to them as you do to your own people. You are all children of one Father, then be like unto the Father ; that is, make no difference between your own nation and others, be the same to all men. I understand now, that good is only possible for me if I accept my unity with all mankind without exception. Hence it is that now the love for my country, my nation, and my government, the services I have wrought them to the injury of other men, seem to me horrible and pitiful, that the renunciation of my country, cosmopolitanism, now seem as noble as once they had seemed to be shameful.

If the old feeling return in a moment of forgetfulness, still never wittingly now can I give occasion to myself or others for this temptation, never help my own countrymen more than I would a foreigner, or desire the success of any government or people. I can acknowledge no states nor nationalities, can take no part in any quarrels of governments or peoples, or between peoples and governments, neither in what I say or write, nor by entering the service of any government. I can take no

part in any affairs which grow out of the division between states—in the collection of customs, dues, and taxes, in the fabrication of arms, or in anything connected with them, in the military service, still less in war itself—and I cannot lend myself to give occasion to other men to do so.

I have understood where the good in my life lies ; I believe in it, and therefore I cannot do what must undoubtedly deprive me of that good. And I believe that by living up to this belief, my life will have the one possible meaning, which is for me at the same time reasonable, joyful, and not to be destroyed by death.

I believe that my reasonable life, my light, is given to me that it may shine before men, not in words but in good works, that men may glorify their Father. I believe that my life and the knowledge of truth are talents given to me to be put to use, and that these talents are a fire only while they burn. I believe that the only meaning my life has is this, that I should live in the light which is in me, and not hide it under a bushel, but hold it up before men that they may see it. And this belief gives me a new strength to fulfil the teaching of Christ, and to get rid of all the hindrances which formerly impeded me.

What formerly undermined for me the truth and practicability of Christ's teaching, what drove me away from it—the possibility of suffering, of privations, even of death at the hands of others ignorant of his teaching—now confirms for me the truth of that teaching and attracts me towards it.

Christ said, When you have elevated the Son of man



you will all be drawn towards me—and I felt myself irresistibly drawn. He said also the truth shall make you free—and I felt myself completely free.

An armed enemy will come, or evil men will fall upon and attack me, I used to think, and if I do not defend myself, they will rob and put me to shame, and torture and kill both myself and those dear to me ; and it seemed to me terrible that this should be. But now all that once troubled me seems but to confirm the joyful truth.

I know now that my enemies and those called robbers or villains, are as much sons of men as I am ; that they also naturally love what is good and hate what is evil ; that they too live on the brink of death, and, like myself, seek salvation, and will find it only in the teaching of Christ. Every evil which they do to me will be an evil done to themselves, and therefore they should render me good. If they are ignorant of the truth, and do evil thinking it to be good, I, who know the truth, must show it to them, and I can do so only by showing my faith by my works, and by refraining from taking any part myself in evil.

Enemies will come, and if you do not defend yourself against them will they not kill you ? It is not so. If there were a society of Christians, doing no evil to any, but giving of their abundance to all, no enemies would slay or torture them. They would take for themselves by force only what these men would have freely given them, because for Christians there is no difference between Russians and Germans, Turks and savages. If a Christian live in the midst of a society which is not

Christian, and which defends itself by war, and he is called upon to take part in war, then comes his opportunity for helping men who are ignorant of the truth. A Christian only knows the truth, that he may bear witness to it before those who are ignorant of it, and this witness he can bear only by his works. He is bound to abstain from war, to do good to men without distinction between so-called enemies and his own people.

Not only foreign enemies, however, but evil men among his own people will fall on the family of a Christian, and if he make no defence will rob, torture, and slay him and them. This, again, is not so. If the members of a Christian family devote their lives to the service of others, no madman would be found to deprive them of their substance, or to kill those who were of service to him. The celebrated Maclay settled among tribes of the fiercest savages, and not only was not slain, but was loved and obeyed, because he did not fear, asked nothing from them, but did good to them. If a Christian live in the midst of those who are not Christians, and who defend themselves and their property by violence, and he be called upon to take part in this defence, then is the moment for him to fulfil the office of his life. He only knows the truth that he may impart it to others, above all, to those with whom he lives, and who are bound to him by family ties and by friendship; and he cannot show that truth otherwise than by not falling into the error into which they have fallen, by not ranging himself on the side either of the attacking or the defending party, by giving up all to others, by showing practically that he needs nothing but

to fulfil the will of God, and that nothing is terrible to him except to fall away from it.

But a government cannot allow any member of the society which it rules to deny the foundation of all public order, and to refuse to fulfil the obligations of a citizen. The government requires from a Christian, that he should take oaths, play his part in the administration of justice or in the military service, and on refusal, subjects him to the punishment of transportation, of imprisonment, or even of death. Again, this demand of the government will to a Christian be a call upon him to fulfil the office of his life. To such an one the demand of a government is the demand of men who are ignorant of the truth. Therefore, knowing the truth, he cannot but witness to it before men who know it not. The violence, imprisonment, or death to which he may be subjected, are an occasion for him to witness, not by words, but by works. Every act of violence proceeds, not from the unreasoning forces of nature, but from the errors of men who have no knowledge of the truth; consequently, the more evil these men do a Christian, the farther are they from truth, the more unhappy, and the more in want of the truth. A Christian cannot give a knowledge of truth to men otherwise than by refraining from the error which misleads them when they harm him, and rendering to them good for evil. In this alone is the office of a Christian's life, in this is its whole meaning, and one which cannot be destroyed by death.

Men bound to one another by deceit, form, as it were, a compact mass. The compactness of this mass

is the evil of the world. The aim of the whole intellectual activity of mankind should be to break through and destroy this aggregate of deceit.

All revolutions are attempts to break up this mass by violence. Men imagine that if they once disperse it, it will cease to exist, and they strike it furiously, in order to break it up, but only weld the atoms more compactly, which must rather each be endowed with an impulsion of its own, before the mass can be finally disintegrated.

The strength of the bond of union among men rests on a lie, on deceit. The strength which can deliver each particle of this mass is truth. Truth is communicated to men only through the works of truth.

Only the works of truth, carrying light into the conceptions of every individual man, can destroy this evil attraction, and can detach men one after another from the mass bound together by it.

During eighteen hundred years this work has been going on.

From the time that the commandments of Christ were declared to mankind it began, and it will not cease, as Christ has himself said (Matt. v. 18) till all be fulfilled.

The Church, formed of those who thought to bring about the unity of mankind by affirming, with oaths, that truth was in them, has long been dead. But the Church composed of those who are united into one, not by promises, not by consecration, but by the works of truth and of good, that Church is alive and will live for ever. It is composed now, as formerly, not of men who

cry, "Lord, Lord!" and work iniquity (Matt. viii. 21, 22), but of men who receive Christ's words and obey them.

The men of this Church know that their life is good, if they do not destroy the unity of the Son of man, and that this good can be destroyed only by disregarding the commandments of Christ. They, therefore, cannot but obey these commandments, and teach others to obey them.

Be these men few or many now, they are the one Church which nothing can overcome, and the one in which all men will be united.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

LEO TOLSTOI.

Moscow,  
22 Jan. 1884

PART III.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST'S  
TEACHING.

(A COMMENTARY ON THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL.)





## PREFACE.

THIS short exposition of the Gospel is extracted from a larger manuscript work, which cannot be published in Russia. The work consists of four parts.

The contents of the present book have been extracted from the third part, which is an investigation independent of previous interpretations, and solely according to what has reached us of the teaching of Christ, as attributed to him, and related in the Gospels.

The Gospels have been harmonized by me according to the sense of their teaching, and in so doing I have had to deviate but little from the order in which they stand ; so that there are rather fewer transpositions of the text in my rendering than in most other harmonies with which I am acquainted. The Gospel of John is taken in the same order as the original.

The division of the Gospel into twelve sections is the natural outcome of the bearing of its teaching, every two sections being united by a link of cause and consequence.

I have also added the introduction from the first chapter of John's Gospel, in which he gives his view of the meaning of the whole teaching, and the conclusion from his Epistle (probably written before the Gospel),

which represents a general deduction from all that precedes. The introduction and conclusion do not form an essential part, but only give a general view of the whole teaching ; and though both might be omitted without detriment (the more so that they are the words of John, and not of Jesus), I have preserved them, because, when the teaching of Christ is taken in its plain meaning, these parts, in their connection with the whole and with each other, represent, in opposition to the strange interpretation of the Church, the simplest indication of the spirit in which Christ's meaning must be understood.

At the head of each section, in addition to a short definition of the contents, I have inserted words corresponding to each from the prayer which Jesus gave to his disciples. When my work was ended, I was surprised to find that the Lord's prayer is indeed nothing less than the whole teaching of Christ, expressed in the most condensed form, and in the identical system by which I had distributed the sections, every expression of it corresponding with them, in idea and order. In the manuscript of the third part, the Gospel, according to the four evangelists, is related without the least omission ; but in the present work the following passages have been left out : the conception, the birth of John Baptist, his imprisonment and death, the birth of Christ, his flight with Mary into Egypt, his miracles in Cana and Capernaum, the expulsion of demons, the walking on the sea, the withering of the fig tree, the raising of the dead, the resurrection of Christ, and the references to the prophecies fulfilled during his life. All this has

been omitted in the present work, because, not containing any part of the teaching, but only describing events which took place before, during, and after the public life of Christ, these passages would render the exposition needlessly intricate; nor do they contain in themselves either contradiction or proof, though their significance for Christianity has been that, to the eyes of unbelievers, they corroborate the divinity of Jesus; but by those who, uninfluenced by the account of miracle, are unable, from the nature of the teaching itself, to doubt that divinity, they are naturally set aside, because felt to be needless.

In the original full exposition, every digression from the accepted translation, all inserted explanations and omissions are justified and proved by a comparison with different versions of the Gospel, by context, and by philological and other considerations. In the present work all these are omitted, because, however precise and correct may be the analysis of separate passages, argument alone will convince no one as to a right understanding of the teaching itself. Such evidence must always lie in its own unity, clearness, simplicity, and completeness, and its force will arise from the sympathy with which it meets the consciousness of every man who is seeking for truth.

Concerning all deviations from the version accepted by the churches, the reader must understand that the generally accepted notion as to the Gospels being, to the veriest letter, sacred, is not only a most profound error, but also a most gross and harmful deception. He must remember also that Christ himself wrote no book,

as did philosophers like Plato or Marcus Aurelius ; never did he, like Socrates, transmit his teaching to learned or even to educated men, but spoke for the most part to an unlettered crowd, and that only long after his death was his teaching and life described.

It must also not be forgotten that, out of a large number of such descriptive manuscripts, the Church selected at first three, adding later a fourth Gospel (that according to John), that out of the great mass of literature about Christ they could not but have accepted much that was not strictly accurate, and that there are as many doubtful passages in the Canonical gospels as in the rejected Apocryphal writings. Nor does it follow, if the teaching of Christ were inspired, that a certain number of verses and letters in recording it should become so, or that certain selections should be considered sacred by the edict of a man. Let it be considered that these selected Gospels are the work of many human minds, that during centuries they underwent endless revisions, that all the Gospels of the fourth century which have reached us are written without punctuation or division into verse and chapter, and that the actual number of different renderings for Gospel passages is estimated at fifty thousand.

All this must be kept in view by the reader, lest he should be carried away by the idea that the Gospels have been transmitted to us direct from heaven in the identical form in which we at present accept them, and he must admit that it is not only unblamable to omit from them unnecessary passages, but that it is most unreasonable to be withheld from doing so by the

sentiment that considers sacred an appointed number of verses and syllables.

On the other hand, I would not have it understood that because I do not consider the Gospels to be sacred books, directly descended from heaven, that therefore I regard them as mere monuments in the history of religious literature. I am conscious of both their theological and historical bearing, but I desire to contemplate neither; what I see in Christianity is not an exclusively divine revelation, nor a mere historical phenomenon, but a teaching which gives the meaning of life.

When at the age of fifty, having asked all the reputed philosophers about me as to the meaning of life, and of myself, and having been told by them that life was an evil, and without meaning, and I myself an accidental concatenation of particles, I fell into despair, and thought to kill myself, I was brought to Christianity by the remembrance of a past time; how in my childhood I and those about me, chiefly men uncorrupted by wealth, had a faith and saw a purpose, and with the light of this reality I called to question the wisdom of those of my own class, and tried to understand the answer of Christianity to believers.

On studying the various forms of Christian religions, I found them to consist in large measure of the strangest superstitions, which, however, did not prevent many from finding life in their teaching. I then began to consider the source from which they were derived, and found in the Gospels an explanation of the meaning of life that perfectly satisfied me, one higher than anything

I had known, or could imagine. And here, dazzled in new-found light, I found full answer for all questioning as to the meaning and purpose of my life and that of others, that explained the solutions of every other nation, and to my mind excelled them. I had sought a reply, not to some historic or theologic difficulty, but to the question of life ; and therefore to me now the chief matter is, not whether Jesus Christ was God, or from whom descended the Holy Ghost, or when and by whom was a certain Gospel written, or if it may not even be attributed to Christ ; but the light itself is of importance to me, that it still shines upon me after eighteen hundred years with undimmed brightness ; but how to call it, or of what it consist, or who gave it existence, is immaterial to me.

This introduction might here conclude if the Gospels were books but lately discovered, or if the teaching of Christ had not undergone eighteen centuries of misinterpretation. In order to understand it, it is well to acquire a clear apprehension of the various systems with which it has been overlaid.

The commonest and most subtle of these is the substitution, under the name of Christian doctrine, of the teaching of the Church for that of Christ which it professes to be, though composed from the explanations of most contradictory writings, in which the teaching of Christ forms but a small part, and that contorted and strained to accord with the explanation of the rest of the document.

According to this misinterpretation, the teaching of Jesus is only one link in the chain of revelation that

commenced with the creation of man, and continues in the Church to the present day. By it Jesus is called God, but such acceptance does not place in his teaching a deeper import than that contained in the words of Moses, in the Psalms, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, the Apocalypse, the Decrees of the Councils, and the writings of the Fathers; no understanding of the teaching of Christ is admitted which does not accord with that of the preceding and following revelation, and in furtherance of this object the least contradictory meaning for passages most hopelessly at variance in the Pentateuch, Psalms, Gospels, etc., is eagerly sought for.

There naturally may be an innumerable number of such interpretations having for their object not the truth, but the reconciliation of contradictions in the Old and New Testaments, every man having a solution of his own, and an assertion that such is a continued revelation of the Holy Ghost, as the Epistles of Paul, the Decrees of the Councils, commencing, "We and the Holy Ghost," the edicts of the popes, synods, and of all sects and persons who claim and proclaim that they are the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. All adopt the same groundless subterfuge for sanction as to the truth of their own interpretation, and they forget that a like method may be, and has been, employed by others who contradict them.

Without entering into an analysis of the faiths so formed, each with its own declaration of truth, it is easy to see that the common ground of all, the equal inspiration of both Old and New Testament, forms an insur-



mountable, self-erected obstacle to understanding the teaching of Christ, and that hence emanates the possibility—nay, even the necessity—of a large number of hostile sects, whose formation can only be prevented by a reconciliation of all the varied revelations, or by a right conception of the teaching of one man, believed to be God. The teaching of him who has descended to earth for the very sake of our instruction cannot be variously understood. If it was indeed God, He at least would have so disclosed the truth that all might understand; if He failed to do so, how then is He God? or if, indeed, the truths of God are such that even He cannot make them intelligible, how can men do so?

If Christ were not God, a great man only, then still less can his teaching engender sects; for a great man is only great so far as he expresses clearly what others have rendered incomprehensible. His words may be dark, but never misty, and there will, and must be, many ways into the darkness, but all will tend towards elucidation. All clear, deep insight into his obscurity, at one with the spirit of his teaching, uncontradicted by the plainer facts of it, and bringing the whole into conformity, will be accepted eagerly by all, and cannot of itself form sects, or rouse animosity. False interpretation will shed itself in time; and that alone which claims a source in the supernatural, which asserts itself as a revelation of the Holy Ghost, demanding recognition as the sole truth, and condemnation for every other, can become sectarian; for the sectarianism of Christianity has its root in the idea that the Gospels are to be understood, not by

themselves, but in accordance with all so-called Holy Writings, and in the fact that the Church, professing a revelation of the Holy Ghost, which from its first descent upon the Apostles has been constantly transmitted by its own elected representatives, nowhere expresses clearly and finally what this revelation may be, and yet upon its supposed continuity builds a faith—and calls it Christ's.

Like the Mahometans, who hold to the revelations of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, these Churchmen admit three also—of Moses, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost ; but unlike the former, who subordinate those of Moses and of Christ to that of Mahomet, who, as the last revelation, explained all that preceded him, and claimed from faithful believers absolute credence ; they would accept all three, and call themselves after the name of the second, in order to combine the license of their own teaching with the authority of Christ's.

Those who accept the revelation of Paul, of the Councils, of the Fathers, of the Pope, or of the Patriarchs, should state unmistakably that they do so, and should call their creed by the name of the last revealer. Far from doing so, they preach doctrines most alien to Christ, and yet so claim his countenance that one might gather from them that it was Christ who declared that it was by his blood he had redeemed the world, that God was a Trinity, that the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and was transmitted to the priesthood by the laying on of hands, that for salvation seven sacraments are needed, that the communion must be celebrated in two aspects, and so forth ;

whereas in all Christ's teaching there is no hint even at all this.

Such a faith might be called that of the Holy Ghost, for only one that acknowledges the revelation of Jesus Christ as final and in itself complete should be called by his name.

Argument on such a point may appear needless, yet up to the present the teaching of Christ has never been separated from an artificial and altogether unwarrantable connection with the Old Testament on the one hand and on the other from such arbitrary additions to, and perversions of, its reality as are continually made in the name of the Holy Ghost.

Up to the present time, some, conceiving Christ to be the second person of the Trinity, accept his teaching only as it accords with that pseudo-revelation of the Holy Ghost which they find in the Old Testament, the Epistles, the Edicts of the Councils, and the Patristic writings, and preach a strange creed founded thereon which they assert to be the faith of Christ. Others who do not believe Christ to be God, understand his teaching by the interpretation of Paul and others; believing him to have been a man, they would, however, deprive him of the right every man may claim of being only answerable for his own words, and in trying to explain his teaching credit him with what he would never have dreamt of saying. This school of critics, well represented by Renan, without giving themselves the trouble of extricating in the teaching of Jesus what he taught himself from what is ascribed to him, without endeavouring to obtain from it any deep meaning, explain his appear-

ance and the propagation of his faith, by incidents in his life, and from the circumstances of his time. The problem, however, which they have failed to explain is, that eighteen hundred years ago there appeared a poor man who taught, was beaten, and executed ; and though since his time many others have in like manner perished for their belief, this one man is still thought by thousands to be—God. Churchmen tell us that he is so considered because so he is ; but if he be not, how can the fact be explained ?

And it is entirely overlooked by the critics of this school, who diligently investigate all the details of the life of Christ, that, however much they may disclose by such a process, they do in reality discover nothing ; could they even establish the minutest details of his life, they would be as far as ever from the secret of his influence, which is hid, not with the people amongst whom he abode, nor by the history and superstition of the times, but in the nature of this man's teaching which made humanity single him out from amongst all other preachers, and accept him as God.

Explanation can only come from a special study of his teaching. And the solution is simple ; but it must be undertaken independently of the many false interpretations volunteered by men who neither wished nor were able to understand him.

The modern school of criticism to which I have referred was so pleased with its own assertion of the non-divinity of Christ, that it has since directed all its efforts to complete the proof of his humanity, forgetting that the more successful be the process, the more difficult

will the final solution be as to the reason of his influence. In order clearly to understand this singular error, it is only necessary to read an article by Havet, one of the imitators of Renan, who asserts that "Jésus n'avait rien de chrétien," or to find in Sourris a proposition which seems to give him pleasure—that Jesus Christ was a very rough and stupid man.

It is not a contradiction of the divinity of Christ that is required, but an exposition of his teaching in all its purity, so lofty and so simple as to obtain for its founder the title of God.

And therefore, if the reader belong to that large number of educated men, who, having been brought up in the religion of the Church, have recoiled from its contradiction of common sense and the conscience; and if he have not lost all love and respect for the spirit of Christ's teaching, I would ask him to consider that what has alienated him is equally foreign to Christ, who has been made responsible for all the monstrous parasitic tradition that has fastened about his words, and that to judge of Christ's Christianity he must study its effect upon its Founder; and if he do so, he will discover that it has no admixture of elements, no sympathy with superstition, no dregs, no darkneses; but that it is the strictest, purest, and fullest system of metaphysical ethics, above the most ambitious ascent of human reason, and in the wide circle of which moves to its achievement all highest human effort.

If the reader is one of those who profess the religion of the Church not for the attainment of personal advantage, but for their own inner welfare, I would ask

him to consider how different a thing, despite its similarity of name, is the teaching in this book from that which he follows, and to decide, not whether the faith so offered him coincides with his own religion, but which of the two most agrees with his heart and reason.

But if he belong to those who, professing the doctrines of the Church, hold to them, not from belief, but for convenience, then let him know that, however many adherents such a method may have, however powerful they may be, on whatever thrones they may seat themselves, or by whatever high names they may be called, they are not the accusers, but the accused. Let such remember that they have long ago said all that for themselves can be said ; that had they succeeded in proving all they desire, the same has been done to its own satisfaction by each of the hundred creeds that on a mutual basis mutually reject each other ; but that now not proof is demanded of them, but that they should justify themselves from the charge of blasphemy in having held the teaching of Esdra, the Councils, the Theophilacts equal to that of Christ the God, and from the charge of calumny against God, in having proclaimed as His teaching the fanaticism of their own hearts, and from the charge of deception in having hid the word of God, and set up in its place their own religion of the Holy Ghost ; and so, depriving millions of men of the good Christ brought for them, have given to the world, for his peace and love, the froward countenance of malice and murder.

Such have before them two alternatives : the rejection

of the falsehood or the persecution\* of those who so correct them, for which, while ending my writings, I prepare myself with joy and with fear for my weakness.

\* The English reader must remember that the author is still living under a system of religious repression.—ED.



## INTRODUCTION.

THE GOSPEL. THE GOOD TIDINGS OF JESUS CHRIST  
THE SON OF GOD.

*The Understanding of Life.*

THE announcement of Jesus Christ substituted a conception of the meaning of life for faith in an external God.

The Gospel is the announcement that the source of all is not an external God, as men think, but the Spirit of life. And therefore in the place of what men call God, according to the Gospel, stands this Spirit.

Without it there is no life, all men are alive only through it, and those who do not understand this, but suppose the flesh to be the foundation of life, deprive themselves of the true life; whereas those who understand that they are alive not through the flesh, but through the Spirit, have the true life that has been shown by Jesus Christ.

Having conceived that the true life of man originates in the Spirit, he gave men the teaching and example of that life in the body.

Previous religions represented a law, stating what was, and what was not to be done for the worship of God.

But the teaching of Christ consists in the understanding of life. No one has ever seen or can know an external God, and therefore the worship of an external God cannot direct life.

Only the acceptance of the source of all, an inward consciousness of the knowledge which flows from that source, points out the way to life.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE SON OF GOD.

*Man, the Son of God, powerless in the flesh, is free in the spirit. (Our Father.)*

CHRIST in his childhood called God his Father. There was at that time in Judea a prophet called John, who preached the coming of God upon the earth, if men would change their lives, counting all men as equal, would not offend but help each other; that so his kingdom might be established. Having heard this preaching, Jesus retired from men into the wilderness in order to contemplate the life of man, and his relation to the eternal beginning of all, called God. He accepted as his father the eternal source of all, which John had preached.

Having stayed in the wilderness forty days without food, he began to suffer from hunger, and thought to himself, I am the Son of God the Almighty, and therefore I must be as He is; but lo, I want to eat, and yet bread does not appear at my desire, therefore I am not almighty. Then he said to himself, Though I cannot create bread out of stone, yet I can refrain from bread; and so, if not almighty in the flesh, I can become so in

the spirit, for I can conquer the flesh, and not in it, but in the spirit be the Son of God. But he said again to himself, If I am the son of a spirit, then I can renounce the flesh, and destroy it. And to this he answered, I am born through the spirit into the flesh ; such was the will of my Father, and I may not oppose it. But if thou canst not satisfy the desires of thy flesh, nor renounce it, thou shouldest work for it, and enjoy all the pleasures it can afford thee. And to this he replied, I can neither satisfy the desires of the flesh nor yet renounce it, but my life is almighty in the spirit of my Father, and therefore in the flesh I must serve, and work only for the Spirit, the Father.

And having become persuaded that the life of man is in the spirit of the Father, Jesus came out of the wilderness, and began to preach unto men. He declared that this spirit was in him, that thenceforth the heavens were opened, and the powers of heaven had united with man, for whom a life of eternity and freedom had commenced, and that all men, however cursed by the flesh, might attain it.

## CHAPTER II.

*And therefore man must work, not for the flesh, but according to the spirit. (Which art in heaven.)*

THE Jews, considering themselves true believers, worshipped an external God, the Creator and Lord of the universe.

According to them, this God had entered into an agreement with them, in which He promised to help them, and they to worship Him ; one of the chief conditions in the agreement being the keeping of the Sabbath. Jesus said, The Sabbath is a human institution. A man who lives in the spirit is above all external rites. The keeping of the Sabbath, like all rites of outward worship, includes a delusion. We cannot do nothing on the Sabbath ; a good deed must be done at any time, and if the Sabbath hinders the doing of a good action, the Sabbath is evidently an error.

Another condition in this agreement with God was the avoidance of the society of those of another faith. Concerning this, Jesus said that God required not sacrifice but mutual love. He also said, referring to the rule of absolution and purification, that God requires charity before external cleanliness ; all such ceremonies,

he said, were harmful, the very tradition of the Church an evil, as it leads men to neglect the most important deeds of love towards a father or mother, and to justify themselves by tradition.

Concerning all that is eternal, the rules of the former law, which defined cases of defilement, Jesus said, Know all of you that nothing external can defile a man ; he is defiled only by what he thinks and does.

After this he went to Jerusalem, the town that was considered sacred, and entering the temple which the orthodox believers of the time considered the abode of God, said that man is more important than the temple, and that it is only necessary to love and to help one's neighbour. Jesus said also that there is no need to worship God in any definite place, but that we must worship the Father by deed, and in the spirit, which is the consciousness in man of his sonship to the external Spirit, which may neither be seen nor shown.

Temples are needless, for the true temple is the world cemented together with love ; and external worship is both false and hurtful when it encourages evil deeds, like that of the Jews which enjoined murder and the neglecting of parents, and because the man who is exact in the accomplishment of rites becomes self-satisfied, and neglects the doing of love.

Man is the Son of God by the Spirit, and therefore he must worship the Father in the Spirit.

## CHAPTER III.

*From the spirit of the Father hath proceeded the life of all men. (Hallowed be Thy name.)*

THE disciples of John asked Jesus, What was his kingdom of God. He said, I and John preach the same kingdom ; it is that all men, however poor, may be blessed. John was the first who gave to the people the kingdom of God, not in an external form, but in the souls of men.

The orthodox believers went to hear him but understood nothing, for such can only conceive what themselves invent about God, and marvel that men refuse their inventions. But John preached the kingdom of God within men, and so out-went his predecessors, that from his time the law, the prophets, and all external worship became unnecessary, since it was disclosed that the kingdom of God was in the hearts of men.

The beginning and end of all is in the soul. Every man recognizes, besides his bodily conception, a free spirit within himself, with a power of reasoning independent of the body. This spirit, infinite and proceeding from the infinite, is the beginning of all which we call God, and we know Him only through our knowledge of



Him in ourselves. This spirit is the source of our life, and must be put above all, for by it we live, and having made it the foundation of our being, we receive eternal life.

The Father who sent His spirit into men did not do so to deceive them with the loss of it, but that they might have it for ever. We cannot choose life and death.

Life in the spirit is death in the body ; in the spirit is life and good, in the body darkness and evil.

Belief in the spirit is the doing of good, unbelief is the doing of evil ; the one is life, the other death. God the Creator, the founder of all, we cannot know ; but we may believe that He has sown, in all alike, the spirit, which on good ground grows, and on bad fails.

Only the spirit gives life to men, and it depends on them whether they keep or lose it. Evil does not exist for the spirit, for it is but the counterfeit of life. Existence or non-existence : for every man, if he choose it, the kingdom of heaven within him. All may enter or refrain ; and he who possesses the life of the spirit *has* eternal life.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

*And therefore the will of the Father is, that all men should have life and happiness. (Thy kingdom come.)*

JESUS had pity on men because they knew not true happiness, and he taught them. He said, Blessed are those who have no goods, no fame, and no care for these things, but wretched are they who seek wealth and honours; for the poor and the oppressed obey the will of the Father, which the rich and the honoured seek only from men in this life. In order to fulfil the will of the Father, we must not fear to be poor and despised; we must be glad of it, and thus show men in what true happiness consists.

In order to fulfil the will of the Father, which gives life and happiness to all men, we must fulfil five commandments.

The first commandment—

To offend no one, and by no act to excite evil in others, for out of evil comes evil.

The second commandment—

To be in all things chaste, and not to quit the wife whom we have taken; for the abandoning of wives and

the changing of them is the cause of all loose living in the world.

The third commandment—

Never to take an oath, because we can promise nothing, for man is altogether in the hands of the Father, and oaths are imposed for wicked ends.

The fourth commandment—

Not to resist evil, to bear with offences, and to do yet more than is demanded of us ; neither to judge, nor to go to law, for every man is himself full of faults, and cannot teach. By seeking revenge men only teach others to do the same.

The fifth commandment—

To make no distinction between our own countrymen and foreigners, for all men are the children of one Father.

These five commandments should be observed, not to gain praise from man, but for our own sakes, for our own happiness, and therefore neither prayer nor fasting in the sight of man is necessary. The Father knows all we need. So we have nothing to ask Him for, but only to strive to do His will. The will of the Father is this, that we should have no malice in our hearts to any one.

To fast is unnecessary, because men only fast to obtain the praise of others, and the praise of man is what we should avoid. We have only to care for one thing—to live according to the will of the Father, and the rest will all come of itself. If we take care for the things of the flesh, we cannot take care for the things which are of the kingdom of Heaven. A man may live without care for food or dress. The Father will give life. We only need to take care that we are living at the present moment

after the will of the Father. The Father gives even to children what they need. We have only to desire the strength of the spirit, which is given by the Father. The five commandments show the way to the kingdom of Heaven. This narrow path alone leads to eternal hope. False teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, always try to drive men from this road. We must beware of them. It is always easy to recognize these false teachers, because they teach evil in the name of good. If they teach violence and slaughter, they are false teachers. By what they teach they may be known.

It is not he who calls upon the name of God, but he who does good work, that fulfils the will of the Father. Thus, whoever fulfils these five commandments will have the absolute certainty of a true life which nothing can deprive him of, but whoever does not fulfil them will not have any certainty of life, but a life which he will soon lose, so that nothing will remain to him. The teaching of Jesus astonished and delighted all the people, because it promised liberty to all.

The teaching of Jesus was the fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah, that the chosen of God should bring light unto men, should defeat evil, and should establish truth, not by violence, but by mildness, humility, and goodness.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE TRUE LIFE.

*The fulfilment of the will of the Father gives a true life.  
(Thy will be done.)*

THE wisdom of life is to understand that we live but as the sons of the Spirit, who is our Father. Men adopt for their lives the aims of the flesh, and through attaining those aims torment themselves and others. By accepting the teaching of the spirit as to life, and by subduing and quieting the flesh, men obtain the full satisfaction in the life of the spirit, of the life which was appointed for them. It happened once that Jesus asked a woman of another faith to give him to drink. The woman refused, under the pretext that she was of another faith. On this Jesus said to her, If thou hadst understood that he is a living man who asks thee for drink, in whom is the spirit of the Father, thou wouldst not have refused, but have sought by doing good to be united in the spirit to the Father, and the spirit of the Father would have given thee water, not such as that which makes men wish to drink again, but water which gives eternal life. It is needless to pray to God in any appointed place ; those

only can serve Him in whom is His spirit, by deeds of love.

And Jesus said to his disciples, The true food of man is the fulfilment of the will of the Father. The fulfilment of that will is always possible. Our whole life is a gathering of the living fruits sown in us by the Father. These fruits are the good which we do unto others.

We have no need to await anything ; our life must be a ceaseless act of good to man.

After this Jesus happened to be in Jerusalem. There, there was a bathing-place, and a man lying doing nothing, a sick man waiting to be cured by a miracle. Jesus went up to him and said, Wait not to be cured by a miracle, but cure thyself as far as thou hast strength, and mistake not the meaning of life. The sick man listened to Jesus, arose, and went his way.

On seeing that, the Pharisees began to reproach Jesus for what he had said, and for having cured the sick on the Sabbath. Jesus said unto them : I have done nothing new, I have done only what our common Father, the Great Spirit, does. He lives and gives life to men, and I have done the same. To do this is the vocation of every man. Every man is free to live or not to live. To live, means to fulfil the will of the Father, that is, to do good to others ; not to live, means to fulfil our own will, and to do no good to others. It is in the power of every man to do the one or the other, to obtain life or to destroy it. See what the true life of man is like ; a master gave his slaves a part of a valuable property, and ordered them to labour each with his own share. Some did so, and others did not, but hid what had been

given them. The master came to call them to account ; and to those who had done much he gave more than they already had, and from those who had done little he took everything away.

The share in the valuable property of the master is the spirit of life in man, the son of the Father. He who labours in life for the life of the spirit obtains eternal life, which he who labours not, loses the life which was given him.

The true life is the common life of all, not the life of one. All must labour for the life of others.

After this Jesus went into the desert, and many of the people followed after him. In the evening the disciples came and said, With what shall we feed all these men? Among the people there were some who had nothing, and some who had taken with them bread and fish. Then Jesus said to the disciples, Give all the bread you have. He took the bread and gave it to his disciples, and they gave it to others, and then others began to do the same. And all ate what others gave, and all were satisfied, but they had no need to eat all they had. And Jesus said, So also you must do. Every one must not seek to provide himself with food, but must give to others what he has, as the spirit in man tells him to do.

The real food of man is the spirit of the Father. Men live only through the spirit.

We are bound to serve all the functions of life, for to live is not to do our own will, but the will of the Father of life. The will of the Father is, that the life of the spirit which is in every man should remain in him, and



that all should preserve that life till the hour of death. The Father is the spirit which is the source of all life. Life is only the fulfilment of the will of the Father, and therefore for the fulfilment of the will of the spirit it is necessary to give up the things of the flesh. The flesh is food for the life of the spirit, and only by consuming the things of the flesh can the spirit live.

After this Jesus chose certain disciples and sent them abroad to proclaim everywhere his teaching of the life of the spirit. When he sent them he said, Go and preach the life of the spirit, and therefore give up beforehand all the pleasures of the flesh, have nothing of your own. Make yourselves ready for persecution, privations, and suffering. You will be hated by those who love the life of the flesh, and they will torture and kill you, but be not afraid. If you fulfil the will of the Father, you will have the life of the spirit, and no man can take it from you.

The disciples set forth, and when they returned they announced that everywhere they had prevailed over evil.

Then the Pharisees said to Jesus that his teaching, even if it prevailed over evil, was an evil itself, inasmuch as those who professed it had to endure suffering. To this Jesus answered, Evil cannot prevail over evil, for evil can only be overcome by good. Good is the will of the Father-Spirit, of the spirit which is common to all men. Every man knows that good exists for him. If he does good to others, if he does what is the will of the Father, he does well. Therefore the fulfilment of the will of the Father-Spirit, is good, although it be accompanied with suffering and death for those who accomplish it.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A FALSE LIFE.

*And therefore, in order to attain to a true life, a man on earth must abstain from the false life of the flesh, and live in the spirit. (On earth as in heaven.)*

FOR the life of the spirit there can be no difference between relations and strangers.

Jesus said that his mother and his brothers were nothing to him in their personal relationship, those only were near to him who fulfilled the will of the common Father.

The happiness and the life of man depend, not upon his family ties, but on the life of the spirit. Jesus says, Blessed are they who keep to the knowledge of the Father. A man who lives by the spirit has no home. Jesus said that no home had been appointed for him. For the fulfilment of the will of the Father no appointed place is needed, it is everywhere and always to be found.

The death of the body cannot be terrible to a man who has surrendered himself to the will of the Father, for the life of the spirit does not depend on the death of

the body. Jesus says that he who believes in the life of the spirit cannot fear anything.

No cares can prevent a man living the life of the spirit. To the man who said that he would perform the will of the Father afterwards, but that he must first bury his father, Jesus answered, Only the dead can trouble about burying the dead ; the living live always by fulfilling the will of the Father.

Care for family and domestic affairs cannot prevent the life of the spirit. He who troubles himself about the way in which his bodily life will be affected by his fulfilling the will of the Father, is like the tiller who while he ploughs looks behind him and not before.

The cares for the joys of the life of the flesh, which seem so important to men, are really but a dream. The only real business of life is the announcement of the will of the Father, attention to it, and fulfilment of it. To the reproach of Martha that she was left alone to look after the supper, while her sister Mary, instead of helping her, cared only to listen to his teaching, Jesus replied, In vain dost thou reproach her ; trouble thyself with these things if they are necessary for thee, but let alone those who need not bodily pleasures ; let them do the one thing needful in order to live.

Jesus said that he who wishes to obtain the true life, which consists in the fulfilment of the will of the Father, must before all things give up his own personal desires. Such an one must not only refrain from fashioning his life according to his own wishes, but be ready at any hour to endure all kinds of privation and suffering.

He who wishes to fashion his bodily life after his own

will, will ruin the true life which fulfils the will of the Father.

And there is no advantage in the accumulation of necessity for the life of the body, if such should ruin the life of the spirit.

The life of the spirit is destroyed by nothing so surely as by the love of gain, the acquirement of wealth. Men forget that, whatever riches and property they acquire, they may die at any moment, and that property is not needed for their life. Death hangs over each of us. Illness, the murderous violence of men, accident, at any moment may put an end to life. The death of the body is the unavoidable condition of every instant of life. While a man lives he should look upon each hour of his life as a respite granted him by favour. We should remember this, and not say that we do not know it. We know and foresee all that happens on earth and in heaven, but we forget the death which we know awaits us every moment. If we did not forget this, we could not give ourselves up to the life of the body, we could not depend on it.

Christ went on to say, In order to follow my teaching, you must weigh well the advantages of serving the flesh and your own will against those of fulfilling the will of the Father. He alone who has carefully calculated this can become my pupil, but he who has done so will not prefer a pretended good and a pretended life, to a true good and a true life. The true life is given to men, and men know it, and listen to its call, but, ever led away by the cares of the moment, they lose this life.

The true life is like the feast given by a rich man, to which he invited guests. He called to them, as the voice of the Father-Spirit calls unto all. But some of the guests were occupied with their trade, others with their household affairs, others again with their family, and these came not to the feast. The poor, however, who had no earthly cares, went to the feast and were happy. And thus men, led away by their care for the life of the body, deprive themselves of the true life.

Whoever shall not utterly renounce all the cares and advantages of the life of the body, cannot fulfil the will of the Father, for it is not possible partly to serve ourselves and partly the Father. We must calculate whether it profit us to serve the flesh, whether we are able to fashion our lives as we will. We must do as a man does who would build a house, or who prepares for war. He calculates beforehand, whether he will be able to finish his house, whether he can hope for victory. If he see that both are impossible, he will throw away in vain neither his trouble nor his troops, to be ruined for nothing and to become the laughing-stock of others. Were it possible to regulate the life of the body according to our own wishes, it might be worth while to serve the flesh ; but as that is impossible, it is better to renounce all that belongs to the flesh and serve only the spirit. Otherwise, it is neither one thing nor the other. Our bodily life we do not secure, and our spiritual life we lose. Therefore, in order to fulfil the will of the Father, we must utterly renounce all the works of the flesh.

The life of the body is as the imaginary treasure of

another entrusted to us, that we may use it so as to procure for ourselves true riches. If a steward serve a rich man, and know that, however long he may serve his master, the latter will call him to account and leave him with nothing, he does wisely, while he still administers his master's wealth, to do good to others. In that case, if his master send him off, those to whom he has done good will receive and keep him. Men should do the same with the life of the body. The life of the body is the treasure of another of which they dispose only for a time. If they use that treasure well, they will obtain true riches for themselves.

Unless we give up our pretended wealth, we shall obtain no real wealth. We cannot serve both the false life of the flesh and that of the spirit; we must serve the one or the other. We cannot strive for riches and serve God. What is great in the sight of men is an abomination unto God. Wealth to God is an evil thing. The rich man is wrong in that he eats in abundance and luxury, while the beggar hungers at his gate. All should know that the retaining of property for ourselves is a direct non-fulfilment of the will of the Father.

There came once to Jesus a rich Pharisee, and he began to boast that he had fulfilled all the commandments of the law. Jesus reminded him of the commandment to love all men as we love ourselves, saying that this was the will of the Father. The Pharisee answered that he had ever done this. Then Jesus said that it was not true. If thou didst wish to fulfil the will of the Father, thou wouldst have no property. It is impossible

to fulfil the will of the Father, if thou hast goods which thou givest not to others.

And Jesus said to his disciples, It seems to men that without property they cannot live ; but I say unto you, that the true life is in giving of your own unto others. A certain man, by name Zaccheus, heard the teaching of Jesus, believed it, and invited Jesus into his house, saying, The half of my substance I give to the poor, and I will repay fourfold those whom I have offended. And Jesus said, Behold a man in the act of fulfilling the will of the Father ; but there is no position in which the will of the Father is wholly fulfilled ; our whole life is but the attempt to fulfil it.

Good has no measure of comparative value ; we cannot say who has done more, who less. The widow who gives her last mite gives more than the rich man who gives his thousands. Neither can we measure good by utility.

Let us take as our example of the way to do good the woman who took pity on Jesus, and heedlessly anointed his feet with the most valuable oil. Judas said that she had acted foolishly, that she had expended what might have fed many. But Judas was a thief and a liar, who spoke of the good things of the flesh, and never thought of the poor. It is not worldly advantage, nor the amount of it, that is wanted, but that we should at every instant of our lives love others and give up to them what is our own.



## CHAPTER VII.

## I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE.

*The true food of life is the fulfilment of the will of the Father, and union with Him. (Give us this day our daily bread.)*

IN answer to the demand of the Jews for proof of the truth of his teaching, Jesus said that the proof was this, that he taught not of himself, but of the common Father of all.

I teach what is good in the sight of the Father of all men, and therefore what is good for all men. Do what I say, fulfil my five commandments, and you will see that what I say is right. The fulfilment of these five commandments delivers the world from evil, and the commandments are true. It is clear that he who teaches, not what is his own personal will, but the will of Him who sent him, teaches truth. The law of Moses teaches the fulfilment of the will of man, and therefore it is full of contradictions ; my teaching prescribes the fulfilment of the will of the Father, and therefore it leads in all things to one end.

The Jews did not understand him, and sought for external evidence that he was the Christ spoken of by

the prophets. To this he answered, Seek not to know who I am, nor whether your prophets wrote of me or not, but take to heart my teaching and what I say to you of our common Father. Myself, as a man, you need not believe in, but believe in what I tell you in the name of the common Father of all men.

No external proof of whence I came is wanted, but that you should follow my teaching. He who follows that shall obtain a true life. There can be no proof of the truth of my teaching. It is light, and, as light cannot be made light, so the truth of what is true cannot be proved. My teaching is light, and whoever sees it has light and life, and for him all proof is needless. But whoever is in darkness must come to the light.

But the Jews again asked him who he was after the flesh. He said to them, I am what I told you from the first, a man, and the son of the Father of life. Only he who understands that he is himself a son of this Father (which truth I teach), and who fulfils His will, ceases to be a slave, and becomes free; for it is only the error which makes us take the life of the body for the real life, that prevents our being free. Only he who understands the truth, that life consists only in the fulfilment of the will of his Father, is free and immortal.

As the slave does not stay in the master's house for ever, whereas the son does always, so the man who lives as a slave to the flesh does not live a life which lasts for ever, but the man who fulfils in the spirit the will of the Father has life eternal. In order to understand me you must understand that my Father is not your Father—is not the one whom you call God. Your father is the

god of the flesh, and my Father is the Spirit of life. Your father is the god of vengeance, the slayer of men, he who punishes men, and my Father gives life. We are, therefore, the children of different fathers. I seek the truth, and you desire to slay me in order to please your god. Your god is a devil, the cause of evil, and if you serve him you serve the devil. My teaching is that we are the sons of the Father of life, and he who believes in my teaching will not see death. The Jews said, How can it be that a man shall not die, when all, even those most pleasing to God, even Abraham himself, died? How canst thou say that thou thyself, and those who believe in thy teaching, shall not die?

To this Jesus answered that he taught nothing of himself. I speak of that first cause of life which you call God, and which is in men. This cause I know, and cannot help knowing; I know its will and fulfil that will, and of that first cause of life I say, that it has been, is, and will be, and that for it there is no death.

To require a proof of the truth of my teaching, is as if proof were required of a blind man, why and how he saw light.

A blind man cured of his blindness, and remaining the same man that he was before, could only say that he had been blind and that now he saw. In the same way, the man who once did not, but now does, understand the meaning of his life, can say no more.

Such a man can only say that formerly he did not know true happiness in life, and that now he does. Like the blind man cured of his blindness, if told that he has been cured by wrong treatment, that the man

who cured him is a sinner, that he ought to have been cured differently, he can only reply that he knows nothing about right or wrong treatment, about the sinfulness of the man who cured him, or of any other better means of cure ; he knows only that he was blind, and that now he can see.

It is thus with the man who has attained to an understanding of the meaning of life, of true happiness, and the fulfilment of the will of the Father ; he cannot say whether this teaching is right or not, whether the teacher is a sinner or not, who discovered this teaching, or whether a better happiness can or cannot be known. He says that formerly he saw no meaning in life, and now he does see a meaning : he knows no more.

And Jesus said, My teaching is the awakening of a life that was asleep. He who believes in my teaching wakes to eternal life, and is alive after death.

My teaching is not to be proved, but men follow it because it alone promises life to them.

As sheep follow the shepherd who gives them food and life, so men accept my teaching because it gives life to all. As sheep do not follow the thief who climbs into the fold, but flee from him, so men cannot believe in a teaching founded on violence and slaughter. My teaching is a door for the sheep, and all those who follow me find a true life. The good shepherd is himself the master, and loves his sheep, and gives his life for them ; the bad shepherd is the hired one, who loves not his sheep. The same with teachers : he only is a true one who does not pity himself, and he is a bad one who makes self his first object. My teaching is, that we take

no care for ourselves, but be ready to give up our bodily life for the life of the spirit ; this is what I teach and what I fulfil.

The Jews still did not understand him, and still sought for proof whether he were Christ or not, and consequently whether they should believe him or not. They said, Do not perplex us, but say at once, art thou Christ or no ? Jesus answered that they should believe not words but deeds. By the works which I teach, you will understand whether I teach the truth or not. Do what I do, and cease to weigh words. Fulfil the will of the Father, then indeed you all will be united with me and with the Father, for I, the Son of Man, am what the Father is. I am that which you call God, and which I call the Father. I and the Father are one. In your scriptures it is written that God said to men, Ye are gods. Every man by the spirit is the son of the Father, and if he lives to fulfil the will of the Father, he is one with the Father. If I fulfil the will of the Father, the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

After this Jesus asked his disciples how they understood his teaching about the Son of Man. Simon Peter answered, Thy teaching is that thou art the Son of the God of life, that God is the life of the spirit in man. And Jesus said to him, Blessed art thou Simon in having understood this, for man indeed could not have revealed this unto thee, but thou hast understood this by the revelation of God within thee.

The true life of men is founded on this knowledge, and such life knows no death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## LIFE NOT IN TIME.

*Therefore a man really lives, when he thinks only of fulfilling the will of the Father in the present, and leaves all thought of the past and of the future. (Give us now our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.)*

TO the doubts of his disciples, as to what would be their reward for renouncing the life of the flesh, Jesus answered, There can be no reward for the man who understands the meaning of my teaching: firstly, because a man who renounces his relations and those dear to him, and his property, in the name of My teaching, gains a hundredfold more friends and property; secondly, because a man who seeks a reward, seeks to have more than others, and that is the thing most contrary to the fulfilment of the will of the Father. In the kingdom of Heaven there are neither greater nor less; all are equal.

Those who seek a reward for doing good are like workmen, who demand a higher payment than what they have agreed for with the master, on the plea that on their own judgment they are worthier than others.

Reward and punishment, abasement and exaltation, do not exist for him who understands my teaching.

No one can be greater or of more importance than another according to the teaching of Christ.

Every one may fulfil the will of the Father, but by doing so no one becomes superior to, or better than, another. Only kings and those that serve them think themselves so. According to my teaching, says Jesus, there can be no superiors, because he who wishes to be better than others must be their servant, because my teaching is, that life is given a man not for profit of being served, but for devotion of service altogether for the sake of others, and that he who does not follow this teaching, but exalts himself, shall but become lower.

In order not to think of reward and exaltation of self, we must understand what is the real meaning of life. It lies in the fulfilment of the will of the Father, that what He has given should be returned to Him. As the shepherd leaves the whole flock to search for one lost sheep, as a woman turns over everything to find a lost coin, so the Father shows Himself to us as the One who draws back to Himself what has once been His.

We must understand what makes life real. True life appears in this, that what is lost returns to the owner, that that which sleeps is awakened. Men who possess a true life, and who have returned to the cause from which they sprang, cannot, like other men, stay to consider who is better and who worse, but, being sharers in the life of the Father, can only rejoice over the lost one who returns to the Father. If a son, who has lost his way and wandered from the Father, repent and return to Him,

surely the other sons of the Father cannot envy his joy, and can only be glad of the return of a brother.

In order to believe in this teaching, to change our lives and fulfil it, no external proofs, no rewards, are needed ; we require a clear understanding of what true life is. If men think that they are the masters of their own lives, that their lives were given them to be spent in the pleasures of the flesh, naturally every act of self-sacrifice for others will appear to them worthy of reward, and unrecompensed they will give up nothing. If the labourers in a garden, who work there on condition of giving the fruits to the master, having forgotten that agreement are required to pay according to it, they will, when the chance occurs, kill him who makes the demand. Those who consider themselves to be masters of their own lives, think like the labourers, and do not understand that life is a gift of the Spirit, which requires the fulfilment of its will. In order to believe and act, we must understand that man can do nothing of himself, that if he renounces the life of the flesh for the sake of doing good, he does nothing for which he can claim thanks and reward. We must understand that a man, when he does good, does only what he is bound to do, what he cannot but do. It is only by thus understanding his life that a man can so believe as really to be capable of doing good works.

It is this understanding of life which makes the kingdom of Heaven, which is invisible, and not such as can be shown anywhere. The kingdom of Heaven is in the understanding of men. The world lives as it has always done. Men eat, drink, give in marriage, trade



and die, and all the while apart from these things there lives in men's thoughts this kingdom. The kingdom of Heaven is the understanding of life, like a tree in spring growing of itself.

The true life through the fulfilment of the will of the Father is not the life which is past, is not that which is to come, but the life of the present moment, what each of us must do now. It follows, therefore, that we must never cease in our efforts to carry out this life. Men are appointed to care not for the life of the past or for that of the future, but for the actual life at any moment, and during that life to fulfil the will of the Father of all men. If they lose their hold of this life, through not fulfilling the will of the Father, they can not again recover it: the watchman appointed to watch through the night does not perform his duty if he fall asleep but for a moment, for in that moment the thief may come. Man, therefore, must apply all his energies to the present hour, for the fulfilment of the Father's will can be achieved only in the present. The will of the Father is the life and the happiness of all men. Therefore the fulfilment of His will is the good of all men. Only those live who do good. Good to men (at the present moment) is life, and unites us to the common Father.

## CHAPTER IX.

## TEMPTATIONS.

*The delusions of the individual and temporal life hide from men the true life, which alone is real in union with the Father. (Lead us not into temptation.)*

MAN is born with a knowledge of the true life through the fulfilment of the will of the Father. Children live this life, and in them is seen the will of the Father. In order to understand the teaching of Jesus, we must understand the life of children, and be what they are.

Children always live according to the will of the Father, and never break the five commandments. They would never break them, were they not led into temptation by their elders. Men corrupt children by leading them into temptation, and by teaching them to break the commandments. When they so do, they behave like one who, tying a millstone around another's neck, casts him into a river. Were there no corruption, the world would have happiness. The world is unhappy only through corruption. Corruption is an evil which men commit for the pretended good of their temporal life. Corruption ruins men, therefore we must sacrifice everything in order not to succumb to it. The tempta-

tion to sin against the first commandment is, that men account themselves upright in the sight of their fellows, and others as indebted to them. In order not to fall into this temptation men should remember the infinite debt which all men owe to the Father, and that they can only acquit themselves of this debt by showing forgiveness to their brethren.

Therefore men must forgive offences against themselves, and not be moved to anger even though the offender trespass again and again. However many times a man is wronged, he must forgive and bear no malice, for the kingdom of Heaven is only possible where there is forgiveness. If we do not forgive, we do the same as the debtor did. A debtor, who owed much, came to the master, and asked to be forgiven his debts. The master forgave him all. The debtor went forth and tormented another man whose debt to him was small. That we may have life, we must fulfil the will of the Father ; we ask forgiveness from the Father of life for that in which we fail to fulfil His will, and we hope to obtain that forgiveness. What do we, then, when we ourselves do not forgive ? We avoid to do for others that which we crave for ourselves.

The will of the Father is happiness, and evil is that which separates us from the Father. How should we not, then, try to put an end to evil as quickly as possible, for evil ruins us and deprives us of life ? Evil plunges us into bodily ruin. As much as we undo this evil, so much do we acquire of life. If evil does not divide us, and we are united in love, we have all that we can wish to have.

The temptation to sin against the second commandment is, that we believe ourselves to have been created for the pleasures of the flesh, and that, by leaving one wife and taking another, we add to those pleasures. In order not to fall into this temptation, we must remember that the will of the Father is not that a man should find comfort in the beauty of a woman, but that, having chosen a wife, he should form with her one flesh. The will of the Father is, that every man should have a wife, and that every woman should have a husband. If each man have but one wife, all men will have wives, and all wives husbands. Therefore whoever changes his wife, deprives a wife of a husband, and gives occasion to another husband to leave his own wife and take the forsaken one. It is allowable to have no wife, but not to have more than one, for that is contrary to the will of the Father, which consists in the union of one husband and one wife.

The temptation to sin against the third commandment is, that men, for the happiness of temporal life, have instituted authorities and governments, and require oaths to be taken to fulfil the obligations imposed by them. In order not to fall into this temptation, we must remember that we are bound to answer for our lives to no one but to God. Men should look on these demands of the civil authorities as being acts of violence, and, according to the commandment, not to resist evil, they should give up and fulfil what is required of them, give their property and their labour, but they cannot give promises and oaths which bind their actions. Oaths which are imposed on men make men evil. A man who believes his life to

depend on the will of the Father, cannot promise what his actions shall be, because for such a man nothing is more sacred than his own life.

The temptation to sin against the fourth commandment is, that men, when they give way to envy and revenge, think by such means to set others right. If a man offend another, these men think it necessary to punish him, and that it is right to try to condemn him.

In order not to fall into this temptation, we must remember that men are told not to judge but to save one another, and that they, themselves committing injustice, cannot judge of what is unjust in others. Men can do but one thing—teach others by giving an example of purity, forgiveness, and love.

The temptation to sin against the fifth commandment is, that men think there is a difference between their fellow-countrymen and foreigners, and that consequently it is necessary to defend themselves against other nations and to injure them. In order not to fall into this temptation, we must know that all the commandments are expressed in one, the fulfilment of the will of the Father, who gives life and happiness to all men alike, and we must do the same good to all men. If other men make a difference, and nations, because they account each other foreigners, make war on each other, each of us notwithstanding should fulfil the will of the Father, and do good to every man, even though he belong to another nationality and make war on our own.

In order not to fall into any of the errors by which man is beset, we must keep our minds fixed on spiritual things, and not on those which concern the body. If a

man once understand that only in the will of the Father he has the life which he at the moment lives, no privation, no suffering, nor even death itself can terrify him. Only he really lives who is ready at any moment to give his bodily life for the fulfilment of the will of the Father.

In order that all men might understand that there is no death for those who truly live, Jesus said, The life eternal must not be understood as being like the present life. Time and place are not in the true life which is in the will of the Father.

Those who have awakened to the true life live in the will of the Father, and the will of the Father knows neither time nor place. They are alive for the Father. If they have died for us, they are alive for God. This is why one commandment includes all ; love with all your strength the origin of life, and, as a consequence, every man who bears within himself that origin.

And Jesus said, That origin of life is the Christ whom you expect. The understanding of this origin of life, for whom there are no persons, no time, and no place, is the very Son of Man of whom I have taught you. Whatever hides from men this origin of life is seduction. There is the seduction of Scribes and Pharisees, give not way to it ; there is the seduction of power, give not way to it ; and there is again the most dangerous seduction, that of the teachers of religion who call themselves orthodox. Beware of this above all others, because these self-styled teachers have invented a false system of worship, and would allure you from the true God.

Instead of serving the Father of life by works, they have put words in their place, they teach words and

themselves do nothing, therefore you can learn nothing but words from them. The Father needs not words but deeds. They have nothing to teach, because they know nothing, but for personal advantage they call themselves teachers. But you know that no one can be a teacher of others. There is but one teacher for all, the Lord of Life, the Spirit. These self-styled teachers, thinking to teach others, deprive themselves of the true life and prevent others from knowing it. They teach men to please their God by external rites, and believe that oaths can bring men to faith. They care only for outward things. If there be but the appearance of faith, they care not for what is in the hearts of men. They are like pompous sepulchres, outside beautiful, and within an abomination. They honour the saints and martyrs with words, but they are the same who formerly put them to death, and now they would kill and torment the saints. From them come all the temptations of the world, for they offer evil in the name of good. Their temptation is the root of all temptation, for they have reviled all that is sacred on earth. They will remain long unconverted, they will continue to practise their deceptions, and to increase the sum of evil in the world ; but the time will come when all their temples will be thrown down, all their outward worship abolished, and then men will understand and be united through love in the service of the one Father of life, and in the fulfilment of His will.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TEMPTATION.

*Therefore to get rid of evil, we must every hour of our life be in unity with the Father. (Lead us not into temptation.)*

THE Jews saw that the teaching of Jesus destroyed their state religion and nationality, and saw at the same time that they could not refute his teaching, so they resolved to kill him. The innocence of Jesus and the justice of his cause stayed them for a time, but the High Priest Caiaphas bethought him of a means of having Jesus put to death, notwithstanding his innocence. Caiaphas said, They had no need to inquire whether this man was innocent or not, for the question was whether they wished the Jewish nation to remain one and indivisible, or that it should perish and be lost among others. Our nation will perish and be lost, if we let this man alone and do not kill him. This argument was decisive, and the Pharisees condemned Jesus to death, and called upon the people to seize him as soon as he appeared in Jerusalem.

Jesus, though he knew of this, came at the feast of Easter to Jerusalem. His disciples would have per-



suaded him not to go there, but Jesus said, Whatever the Pharisees may wish to do unto me, whatever others may do, nothing can change what is for me the truth. If I see the light, I know where I am, and whither I go. Only he who knows not truth can fear anything or doubt of anything. He alone stumbles who does not see.

So he went to Jerusalem. On the way he stopped at Bethany. There Mary poured upon him a vessel of costly ointment. Jesus, knowing that bodily death awaited him, said to his disciples, who reproached Mary for having anointed him with ointment so costly as spikenard, that it was a preparation of his body for death.

When Jesus left Bethany and went to Jerusalem a great multitude met him and followed him, and this the more persuaded the Pharisees of the necessity of putting him to death. They only waited for an opportunity of seizing him. He knew that the slightest imprudent word of his against the law would be the pretext for his punishment, but notwithstanding he entered the temple and again proclaimed that the worship of the Jews, with their sacrifices and oblations, had hitherto been false, and preached his own doctrines. But his teaching, founded on the prophets, was such that the Pharisees were unable to find an offence against the law, for which he might be condemned to death, all the more that the greater part of the people were in his favour.

Now at the feast there were certain heathen, and they, hearing of the teaching of Jesus, wished to speak with him about it. The disciples, when they heard of this, were frightened. They were afraid that Jesus, in

his conversation with the heathen, would betray himself, and anger the people. At first they wished to prevent Jesus meeting them, but afterwards decided to tell him who wished to speak with him. On hearing this Jesus was disturbed. He understood that, if he preached to gentiles, he would clearly show that he had cast off the whole of the Jewish law, would set the common people against himself, and give occasion to the Pharisees for accusing him of associating with the hated gentiles. Jesus was disturbed, knowing this, but he knew also that his vocation was to explain to men, the sons of one Father, their unity without distinction of faith. He knew that this step would ruin him in his bodily life, but that his thus perishing would give men a true understanding of life, and therefore he said As the grain of wheat must perish for the fruit to grow, so a man must lose his life in the body to bring forth the fruit of the spirit. He who keeps the life of the body, loses the true life ; and he who loses the life of the body, receives the true life. I am troubled by what awaits me, but truly up to this time I have lived only for that, only in order to live till this hour ; how can I not do what I have to do ? Therefore at this hour let the will of the Father be shown in me.

Then, turning to the people, to the heathen and the Jews, Jesus spoke out clearly what he had said only in private to Nicodemus. He said, The life of mankind with its various faiths and various governments, must cease. All human authorities must come to an end. It is only necessary to understand man's position as a son of the Father of life, and this understanding will destroy

all divisions and authorities made among men, and will unite all men in one whole.

The Jews said, Thou destroyest all our religion. According to our law, there is a Christ, and thou sayest there is only a Son of Man, and that he must be exalted. What does this mean? He answered them, To exalt the Son of Man means to live by the light of the understanding which is in men, in order to live, while there is light, according to it. I teach no new faith, but only what every man knows in himself. Every man knows that he has life in him, and every man knows that life is given to him and to all men by the Father of life. My teaching is only that you should love the life given by the Father to all men.

Many of those not in authority believed Jesus ; but the great men and the rulers did not believe, because they would not judge of his speech by the meaning which it had for eternity ; they considered his doctrines only by their relation to him. They saw that he turned the people away from them and wished to kill him, but were afraid to take him openly, so they desired to take him, not in Jerusalem and in the light of day, but somewhere secretly.

Then there came to them one of the twelve disciples, called Judas Iscariot, and they gave him money that he should betray Jesus into the hands of the servants when he was not with the people. Judas promised them and again joined Jesus, awaiting the time to betray him. On the first day of the feast, Jesus and the disciples celebrated the passover, and Judas, thinking that Jesus did not know of his treachery, was among

them. But Jesus knew that Judas had sold him for a price, and, when they were all seated at table, Jesus took the bread, broke it into twelve parts, and gave a piece to each of the disciples, to Judas among the rest, and without naming any one, said, Take, eat my body.

Then he took the cup with wine, and gave it to them, that all might drink, and Judas with them, saying, One of you will shed my blood ; drink my blood.

Then Jesus arose and began to wash the feet of all the disciples and of Judas, and when he had finished, he said, I know that one of you will betray me unto death, and will shed my blood, but I have given him to eat and to drink, and have washed his feet. I have done this to teach you how you should behave to those who do you evil. If you act thus, you shall be blessed. The disciples still continued to ask which of them should be his betrayer. Jesus, however, would not name him, lest they should punish him. When it grew dark Jesus pointed to Judas, and told him to go out. Judas rose from the table, went out, and no one stopped him.

Then Jesus said, This is what it is to elevate the Son of Man. To do so means to be loving like the Father, not to those alone who love us, but to all, even to those who do ill to us. Therefore, do not argue about my teaching, do not reason about it as the Pharisees do ; but do what I have always done, what I have now done before you. I give you one commandment—love all men. My whole teaching lies in this, that ye love men always and to the end. After this, fear fell on the soul of Jesus, and with his disciples in the night he went into a garden to hide himself. On the way he

said to them, You are none of you strong, but all timid ; when I am taken you will all flee from me. Then Peter said, No, I will not leave thee, I will defend thee even unto death. And all the disciples said the same. Then Jesus said to them, If it be so, prepare for defence ; collect your stores, for you will have to hide ; take arms in order to defend yourselves. The disciples said that they had two swords. When Jesus heard them speak of swords, he was grieved in his heart, and going to a solitary place he began to pray, telling his disciples to do the same, but they did not understand him. Jesus said, Father, put an end to the struggle of temptation within me. Strengthen me to the fulfilment of Thy will ; I desire not my own will, the defence of the life of my body ; I desire Thy will, in order not to resist evil. The disciples still understood not. He said to them, Think not of the flesh, but strive to raise yourselves in the spirit ; the spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak. And again he said, Father, if this suffering be inevitable, let me bear it ; but in all my suffering I desire only that Thy will, and not mine, be done. The disciples did not understand. Then again Jesus struggled with his temptation, and at length conquered it, and coming to the disciples said, Now all is decided, you may be at peace ; I will not contend, but will give myself into the hands of the men of this world.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE.

*Personal life is a deception of the flesh, an evil. True life is the life which is common to all men. (But deliver us from the evil one.)*

JESUS, feeling himself ready for death, went forth to give himself up. Peter stopped him, and asked him whither he was going. Jesus answered, I am going whither thou canst not come. I am ready for death, and thou art not yet ready. Peter said, Not so; I am now ready to lay down my life for thee. Jesus answered that a man can promise nothing. He said to his disciples, I know that death awaits me, but I believe in the life of the Father, and therefore do not fear death. Be not troubled by my death, but believe in the true God and in the Father of life, and then my death will not seem terrible to you. If I am united with the Father of life, I cannot lose life. It is true that I do not tell you the how and the where of life after death, but I show you the way into true life. My teaching does not speak of what life will do, but points out the only true way to life, by union with the Father. The Father is the beginning of life. My teaching is that life is in the will of the

Father, and that the fulfilment of His will gives life and happiness to all men. Your guide, when I am no longer with you, will be your knowledge of the truth. While you fulfil my teaching, you will always feel that you are in the truth, that the Father is in you, and you are in the Father. And you, knowing the Father within you, will feel that peace which nothing can take from you. Therefore, if you know the truth and live in it, neither my death nor your own can alarm you.

Men imagine that each has a separate existence in his own individual will; but this is a deception. The only true life is that which acknowledges the source of life in the will of the Father. My teaching unfolds this unity of life, and represents life, not as consisting of separate branches, but as the one tree from which all branches grow. Only he who lives in the will of the Father, like the branch on a tree, really lives, and he who lives by his own will, perishes like the branch which drops off. The Father gave my life for the triumph of good, and I have taught you to live for this victory. If you fulfil my commandments, you will be blessed. The commandment in which my whole teaching is expressed is this only, that all men should love one another. Love consists in the laying down of our bodily life for others. There is no other explanation of love. When you fulfil my commandment of love, you will not be as slaves that without understanding obey their master's orders, but as free men, free as I myself am, for I have explained to you the meaning of life which follows on the knowledge of the Father of life. You have accepted my teaching, not because you have chosen it by chance, but because

it is the only true teaching, and alone can make men free.

The teaching of the world is to do evil to men, my teaching is to love one another, and therefore the world has hated you as it has hated me. The world does not understand my teaching, and therefore it will persecute you, and do you evil in the belief that by doing so it is serving God. Be not, then, astonished at this, and understand that this must be so. The world, not understanding the true God, must persecute you, and you must uphold the truth.

Do not sorrow because they kill me, for they will do so because I uphold the truth. Therefore, my death is needed that truth may be upheld. My death, in which I do not renounce the truth, shall strengthen you, and you will understand what is false and what is true, and what follows from the knowledge of falsehood and of truth. You will understand that the error lies in this, that men believe in the life of the body and do not believe in the life of the spirit, that the truth lies in union with the Father, and that from this follows the victory of the spirit over the flesh.

When my life in the body has ceased, my spirit will be with you. But you, like all other men, will not always feel in you the strength of the spirit. You will sometimes grow weak and lose its strength; you will fall into temptation, and again at times awaken to the true life. You will be often subject to the enslaving enticements of the flesh, but that will be only for a time; you will have to suffer and to be born again in the spirit; as a woman suffers in the pains of childbirth, and then



feels the joy of having brought a man into the world, so will you feel when, after the enslavements of the flesh, the spirit within you is roused again to life. Then you will feel a happiness and a peace that leaves you nothing more to desire. Know, then, beforehand, that notwithstanding persecution, internal struggles, and the weakening of the spirit, the spirit is alive in you, and that the only true God is the understanding of the will of the Father which has been unfolded to you by me.

Then addressing himself to the Father-Spirit, Jesus said, I have done what Thou hast commanded me, I have revealed to men that Thou art the beginning of all. And they have understood me. I have taught them that they have all proceeded from one source of infinite life, and that therefore they are all one; that as the Father is in me, and I in the Father, so are they one with me and with the Father. I have revealed to them that as Thou in love hast sent them into the world, so they through love must live in the world.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT OVER THE FLESH.

*Therefore for the man who lives not a personal life, but in the common life which is through the will of the Father, there is no evil. The death of the body is union with the Father. (Thine be the kingdom, the power, and the glory.)*

WHEN Jesus had finished his discourse to his disciples, he arose, and, instead of escaping or defending himself, he went to meet Judas, who had brought soldiers to take him. Jesus went up to him and asked him why he was there. Judas gave no reply, and a crowd of soldiers surrounded Jesus. Peter rushed to defend his teacher, and, drawing his sword, began to fight; but Jesus stopped him, saying that whoso takes the sword shall himself perish by the sword, and ordered him to give up his sword. Then Jesus said to those who came to take him, I formerly went amongst you alone without fear, and now I fear you not, and give myself up unto you. You may do with me what you will. And then all the disciples forsook him and fled. Jesus remained alone. The officer ordered the soldiers to bind him and take him to Annas, who had been high priest, and

lived in the same house with Caiaphas, the latter being the then high priest. It was he who thought of the pretext which decided the Jews to kill Jesus—either they must kill him, or the whole nation must perish. Jesus, feeling himself in the hands of the Father, was ready for death, and did not resist when he was seized, nor did he fear when they led him away. Peter, who had just before promised Jesus that he would not abandon him, but would lay down his life for him, who had tried to defend him, now when he saw that Jesus was led away to punishment, was afraid that he might suffer with him, and to the questions of the servants, whether he were not one of Jesus' followers, denied it, and went away, and only afterwards, when he heard the cock crow, did he understand all that Jesus had said to him. He understood that there are two temptations of the flesh, that of fear and that of using violence; he understood then that Jesus had struggled against these temptations when he prayed in the garden, and invited his disciples to pray. Now he had himself fallen into both these temptations of the flesh against which Jesus had warned him; he had tried to resist evil by violence, and to defend truth by fighting and evil-doing; he had been unable to withstand the fear of bodily suffering, and had denied his teacher. Jesus had not given way to the temptations of resistance when his disciples had secured two swords to defend him with, nor to the temptation of fear when he stood before the people in Jerusalem in the presence of the heathen, nor when the soldiers came to bind him and lead him to his trial.

Jesus was brought to Caiaphas. Caiaphas asked

Jesus as to his teaching, but Jesus, knowing that Caiaphas questioned him, not in order to know what his teaching was, but only in order to accuse him, gave no direct answer, but said, I have concealed nothing, and conceal nothing ; if thou wouldst know what my teaching is, ask of those who have heard and understood it. For this, one of the servitors of the high priest struck Jesus on the cheek, and Jesus asked why he had struck him. The man gave no answer, and the high priest proceeded with the trial. They brought witnesses to prove that Jesus had boasted of destroying the Jewish religion. The high priest again questioned Jesus ; but he, seeing that the other questioned him, not to learn anything, but only to keep up the appearance of justice, answered nothing.

Then the high priest asked him to say if he were Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered, Yes, I am Christ, the Son of God ; and now, while persecuting me you will see that the Son of Man is equal to God.

And the high priest rejoiced over these words, and said to the other judges, Are not these words sufficient to condemn him ? And the judges answered that they were, and condemned him to death. When they had said this, the crowd threw themselves upon Jesus, and they beat him, spat in his face, and abused him, but he held his peace.

The Jews had no power to put a man to death, they required a decision from the Roman governor ; and therefore, having condemned Jesus according to their law, and abused him, they brought him before Pilate, that he should order him to be put to death. Pilate asked

why they wished for his death, and they answered, Because he is an evil man. Pilate said, If he is an evil doer, judge him according to your law. They replied, We desire that thou shouldst put him to death, because he has sinned against Cæsar: he is a rebel, he has set the people at variance, he forbids tribute to be paid to Cæsar, and calls himself the King of the Jews. Pilate called Jesus to him and said, What means this? how art thou King of the Jews? Jesus said, Wouldst thou really know what my kingdom is, or dost thou ask me only for appearance sake? Pilate answered, I am no Jew, and it is the same to me whether thou callest thyself the King of the Jews or not; but I ask thee what man art thou, and why do they say that thou art a King? Jesus said, They say truly that I call myself a King. I am a King, but my kingdom is not of this world but of heaven. Earthly kings kill and fight, and they have soldiers to aid them, but thou seest that I do not resist, though I have been bound and beaten. I am a heavenly King, and all-powerful in the spirit.

Pilate said, Then it is true that thou callest thyself a King? Jesus answered, Thou knowest it thyself. Every man who lives in the truth is free. By this alone I live, and for this alone I teach; I reveal to men the truth that they are free through the spirit. Pilate said, Thou teachest truth, but no one knows what truth is, and each has his own conception of the truth. And having said this, he turned from Jesus and went again unto the Jews, and said to them, I find no fault in this man. Why would you put him to death? The priests

answered that he deserved death because he roused the people to revolt. Then Pilate, in the presence of the high priests, began to question Jesus ; but Jesus, seeing that he was only questioned for form's sake, answered nothing. Then Pilate said, I alone cannot condemn him ; take him before Herod.

In Herod's court Jesus gave no answer to the accusations of the high priests ; and Herod, taking him for an idle boaster, ordered him to be arrayed in a gorgeous garment, and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate pitied Jesus, and would have persuaded the high priest to pardon him, if but in honour of the feast ; but the priests held to what they had said, and they and all the people after them cried aloud, Let him be crucified ! Pilate a second time tried to persuade them to let Jesus go, but the priests and the people still cried that he must be put to death. They said, He is guilty in that he calls himself the Son of God. Pilate again called Jesus before him, and asked him, What does it mean that thou callest thyself the Son of God ? Who art thou ? Jesus answered nothing. Then Pilate said, Why dost thou not answer me, when I have power to put thee to death or to set thee free ? Jesus answered, Thou hast no power over me. Power cometh only from above. Then Pilate for the third time tried to persuade the Jews to let Jesus go, but they said, If thou dost not put to death this man whom we have shown to be a rebel against Cæsar, thou thyself art not a friend but an enemy of Cæsar. On hearing these words Pilate gave way, and ordered Jesus to be put to death ; but first he had him stripped and scourged, and then again

clothed him in a gorgeous robe, when he was beaten, mocked, and abused. Then they gave him a cross to carry, brought him to the place of punishment, and crucified him. And when Jesus was hanging on the cross all the people reviled him. To all this he answered, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And again, when death was near, he said, My Father, into Thy hands I give my spirit; and bending his head he gave up the ghost.

## THE CONCLUSION.

TO UNDERSTAND LIFE IS TO DO GOOD.

*The good tidings of Jesus Christ is the revelation of the understanding of life.*

TO understand life we must know that the source of life is infinite good, and that consequently the life of man is the same. To understand this source we must know that the spirit of life in man proceeds from it. Man, who before did not exist, was called into being by this cause of life. This cause gave happiness to man, and therefore happiness is in its nature.

In order not to be led away from the source of his life, man must keep to the only property of this source which he can understand, the happiness of the works of love. Therefore the life of man must be devoted to happiness, *i.e.* to good works and to love. Man can do good to none but his fellow-men. All individual desires of the flesh are irreconcilable with the source of good, and therefore man must renounce them, and sacrifice the life of his body to the cause of goodness, and to active love from his neighbour. From the understanding of life as revealed by Jesus Christ, follows love to our neighbour. There are two proofs of the truth of this understanding ;



one is that, for those who do not accept it, the cause of life appears an illusion which leads men to desire such life and happiness as they cannot attain ; the other is, that man in his heart feels love and good to his neighbour to be the only true, free, and eternal life.

THE END.

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